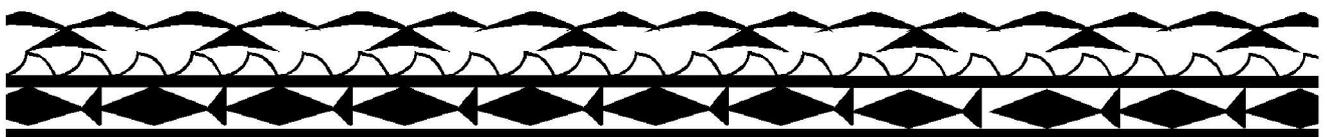




DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 1995 - 1996
REPORT OF THE TWENTY - NINTH MEETING OF THE
FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE,
MAY 1996



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FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE

TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 - 17 May 1996

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Representatives from Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa met at Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga for the Twenty-Ninth meeting of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFC29).
2. Also present were observers from American Samoa, South Pacific regional organisations - the Forum Secretariat, the South Pacific Commission (SPC), the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) - as well as the Commonwealth Secretariat, the European Commission (EC), the Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation (OFCF) of Japan, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WPRFMC). A list of participants is appended at **Attachment A**.

Opening of the meeting

3. The delegate from Papua New Guinea, Mr Elias Wohengu, as the outgoing Chairman called the meeting to order. He then called upon the Reverend Maka Tu'ipulotu to lead the meeting in prayer, after which he invited the Governor of Vava'u, the Honourable Tu'i'afitu, to officially open the meeting. A copy of the Governor's address is appended as **Attachment B**.
4. On behalf of all the delegates, the representative of Tuvalu thanked the Governor for his opening address (**Attachment C**).
5. The outgoing Chairman, Papua New Guinea, recapped on the key issues of the past 12 months. A copy of the outgoing Chairman's statement is appended as **Attachment D**.

Selection of Chairman

6. The representative from Tonga, 'Akau'ola, Secretary for Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, was selected to chair the meeting. After a brief speech of acceptance, Akau'ola called upon the Reverend Maka Tu'ipulotu to provide the benedictory prayer. This was followed by a welcoming performance in the Tongan tradition. In accordance with established procedure, Tuvalu, the next in line to host the next year's Forum Fisheries Committee meeting, was selected as Vice-Chairman.

Apologies

7. Apologies were received from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), the International Centre for Living and Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) of the United States, the United Kingdom Overseas Development Agency (UKODA) and the Western Pacific Fisheries Consultative Committee (WPFCC).

Adoption of the agenda

8. The meeting adopted the agenda annexed as **Attachment E**. Cook Islands proposed that, in view of recent discussions in relation to management issues in the longline fishery and the fact that a sub-committee continues to consider a sub-regional multilateral longline arrangement with Taiwan, there should be an additional agenda item dealing with these matters. The meeting agreed that this item should be incorporated in Agenda Item 7.3.
9. The meeting also agreed that the whole of Section II of the agenda should be held in closed session and that agenda item (e) "Application for membership" be considered under agenda item 10 "Review of FFA Membership Policy".

Applications for observer and guest status

10. There were no applications for observer and guest status.

Country Statements

11. Australia presented a statement appended as **Attachment F**.
12. Cook Islands, dealing with a sub-regional multilateral longline arrangement with Taiwan, expressed the hope that results could be achieved on this issue by the conclusion of the meeting.
13. Fiji presented a statement appended at **Attachment G**.
14. Nauru presented a statement appended at **Attachment H**.
15. New Zealand presented a statement appended at **Attachment I**.
16. Niue presented a statement appended as **Attachment J**.
17. Palau presented a country statement appended at **Attachment K**.
18. Papua New Guinea thanked all member countries for the assistance given to Papua New Guinea during its tenure for the position of FFC Chairman.
19. Solomon Islands presented a statement appended at **Attachment L**.
20. Tuvalu expressed its appreciation for being acclaimed as Vice-Chairman and the Secretariat for its responsiveness and assistance. Tuvalu expressed appreciation to donor agencies for their assistance to FFA during the past year.
21. Vanuatu presented a statement appended as **Attachment M**.
22. Western Samoa congratulated the Secretariat on the preparation of documents and general arrangements, in collaboration with Tonga, for the meeting.
23. Tonga presented a statement appended as **Attachment N**.
24. All countries offered their thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Papua New Guinea, for its leadership during the past year. The countries offered their congratulations to, and support for, the incoming Chairman, Tonga, for the year ahead. The delegations also requested the Chairman to convey their gratitude and appreciation to the Governor and people of Vava'u for the hospitality extended to them. The new Deputy Director, Mr. Ian Cartwright, was congratulated by the meeting upon his recent appointment to the Secretariat.

Director's Report

25. The Director of FFA presented his annual report [FFC29/2]. The Director drew attention to:

- the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing.
- the ongoing activities of the FFC Sub-committees on Future Management Arrangements and Member Country Contributions;
- the implementation of the Federated States of Micronesia Arrangement for Regional Fisheries Access;
- the securing of alternative funding and the subsequent progress in the planning and design of a regional vessel monitoring system;
- more effective regional and national surveillance measures, aided by the additional human resources given to the Secretariat by the Australian Defence Force and the National Marine Fisheries Service of the United States;
- the staging of the first Judicial Seminar bringing together eminent regional Judges representing six FFA countries to discuss regional fisheries issues;
- the completion of the FFA Computer Training Centre;
- the proposed cancellation of the European Union's regional surveillance project;
- delays experienced in other areas of the work programme, caused by the increasing demands of the two FFC sub-committees;
- the resignation of the former Deputy Director and the resulting disruption to the Agency's activities;
- limited success in attracting additional sources of extra-budgetary support; and
- slow progress in developing additional multilateral fisheries access arrangements.

26. The meeting thanked the Director and his staff for the report and approved the transmission of the report for the forthcoming South Pacific Forum meeting in Majuro, Marshall Islands. Papua New Guinea requested that the Secretariat's support of the PNA and the additional workload it created, should be brought to the attention of the Forum. In response to a suggestion from Nauru, the meeting agreed that the report should be reproduced in booklet form.

Observers' statements

27. The SPC made reference to its continued close co-operation with FFA, particularly of late, in the field of future management arrangements. Mention was also made of the co-operation in respect of national assessments for tuna stocks and joint maintenance of a regional tuna database.

28. The Forum Secretariat confirmed the continuing interest of the Forum in fisheries matters. There was also a reminder that the Forum Secretariat as Chairman of SPOCC, held a particular interest in the Review of Regional Institutional Arrangements for the Marine Sector.

29. SOPAC noted the continued co-operation between FFA and SOPAC, particularly in relation to maritime boundaries and sea-bed mapping.

30. SPREP offered apologies for the absence of its Deputy Director. Reference was made to the organisation's Regional Wetlands Action Plan and ICRI Pacific Regional Action Strategy which was being circulated to SPREP member countries. The meeting was also reminded that 1997 would be the "Year of Coral Reefs".

31. UNDP asked the meeting to consider whether the decision to declare parts of the agenda closed might be lifted as regards to certain observers, given their interest in the matters to be discussed. Specifically, UNDP requested observer status for the agenda item on the Review of Regional Institutional Arrangements for the Marine Sector, which it had partly funded.
32. The EC representative confirmed that the EU remains committed to the implementation of the Lomé Convention. The paramount importance of fisheries and associated management and developmental issues was stressed. Despite the difficulties which had arisen over financing of the proposed regional vessel monitoring system, there was still a keen wish to aid the fisheries sector. The FFA was invited to submit a new set of proposals for EU funding consideration. Improved co-ordination between the EU and the FFA would, however, be necessary.
33. The USP representative made reference to new degree programmes in Marine Affairs, Marine Science and Law, and the university's involvement with the International Ocean Institute in offering short training courses on marine resources management.
34. The Commonwealth Secretariat drew attention to the fact that 10 out of the 16 FFA member countries are also members of the Commonwealth. It acknowledged that funding to FFA by the Commonwealth Secretariat had been progressively reduced. It was suggested that closer contact should be maintained between the two bodies.
35. American Samoa provided a country statement appended as **Attachment O**.
36. OFCF confirmed its continuing, substantial interest in the region. Of a total budget of 9 billion yen, 6 billion yen is spent in the region. The representative reminded the meeting of the 4th OFCF/PNA Symposium to be held in Tokyo in June.
37. The representative from WPRFMC presented a statement which is appended at **Attachment P**.
38. ICLARM provided a written statement which is appended as **Attachment Q**.

Issues arising from recent FFC meetings

39. The Deputy Director introduced the paper [FFC29/4] and noted that there had been three FFC meetings in the previous 12 months, with a considerable number of items actioned by the Secretariat. In order to save time, the Deputy Director requested that questions be raised from the floor on specific items.
40. Nauru enquired whether the education allowance fixed at FFC26 featured in the budget papers which were presented. This was confirmed to be the case.
41. The meeting noted the report.

Status of various regional and international agreements

42. The Secretariat presented a paper [FFC29/5], and drew attention to the current status of the regional and international agreements affecting FFA member countries. The hope was expressed that the paper would provide a useful reference document and it was requested that member countries make known any alterations which should be made to various tables presented to take account of recent signatures or ratifications of the instruments concerned.
43. Papua New Guinea thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of a useful paper. It was Papua New Guinea's belief that it had already signed the Wellington Convention. New Zealand indicated that it would be pleased to look into the matter of Papua New Guinea's signature of the Wellington Convention. It was subsequently clarified that PNG has not yet signed the Wellington Convention.
44. New Zealand thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensive report, and suggested modifications to paragraphs (e) and (f) in the recommendations. These changes encouraged countries to sign,

accede and ratify as appropriate, both international conventions and regional arrangements, at the earliest opportunity.

45. Tuvalu confirmed that there were several instruments that it had yet to ratify. It would be seeking assistance of FFA with regard to the general harmonisation of its domestic laws in the process of ratifying UNCLOS and the UN Implementing Agreement.
46. Palau confirmed its intention to proceed with ratification of all outstanding instruments as soon as possible.
47. Australia indicated an intention to ratify the UN Implementing Agreement by the end of 1996.
48. Various other delegates also indicated an intent on behalf of their countries to proceed with the ratification of outstanding instruments at the earliest opportunity.
49. Cook Islands indicated that Cabinet approval had been given for signature of the UN Implementing Agreement.

Status of tuna stocks

50. Dr. John Hampton from SPC presented paper FFC29/6 on the status of tuna stocks in the region. It was noted that this paper was unchanged from the paper presented at the meeting of the 8th Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish, Noumea, New Caledonia, August 1995. However, some updated tables were being prepared for distribution.
51. Dr. Hampton provided some details of a 30,000 mt per year purse seine fishery for bigeye tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, where "chumming" was used to attract the fish to the surface. The fish taken were 70-90 cm long and 2 years old, compared to the 3-4 year old fish typically recruited to the longline fishery. It is understood that fish from this fishery are canned.
52. Australia advocated a precautionary approach, particularly for bigeye tuna, noting that the tag-recapture work was 5 years old. Australia asked how relevant the SPC's results were for current stock assessments. Dr. Hampton advised that if the fisheries continued at the current levels of exploitation, which it was expected they would, SPC's tagging results would remain pertinent.
53. In response to a question from Papua New Guinea about whether the "chum" fishery for bigeye was in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing, Dr. Hampton stated it was not strictly contrary to the Code, but that it was still undesirable given that its effect on the longline fishery was unknown. Monitoring of the fishery would be required to determine any effects. No serious management decisions have been made for bigeye tuna, but the Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) would be hosting a symposium on bigeye later in 1996.
54. In thanking SPC for the report, Fiji asked about the status of billfish stocks. In response, Dr. Hampton stated that the activities of SPC have not extended to billfish to any great extent, but noted that the status of billfish stocks would be addressed under proposed future management arrangements.
55. Tonga asked what methods were used for the collection of data for analysis of tuna stocks. Dr. Hampton responded by stating that, particularly for the albacore and bigeye tuna, fine scale logbook data over a large area was the best for a thorough analysis.
56. In response to a question from SOPAC on the effect of historical driftnet catches on the albacore stock, Dr. Hampton replied that, in the North Pacific, there was a divergence of opinion on what the result of driftnet fishing had been. SPC had recently obtained historical data from Japan on its driftnet catches in the South Pacific.

Closed Session of the Committee

57. The Committee met in closed session to consider Agenda items:

- 7.1 FFC Sub-Committee on Future Management Arrangements;
- 7.2 Proposed Regional Strategy for Technical Consultation on the Collection and Exchange of Fisheries Data, Tuna Research and Stock Assessment;
- 7.3 Sub-regional Longline Multilateral Arrangement and other Longline issues;
- 8 FFC Sub-committee on Member Country Contributions;
- 9 Consideration of the SPOCC Review of Regional Institutional Arrangements for the Marine Sector;
- 10 Review of FFA Membership Policy;
- 11 Solomon Islands Debit Tax Act 1995 and Foreign Exchange Transaction Levy 1995.

Financial Report for Year Ending 31 December 1995

58. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/12.1. It was noted that there was overspending in two areas, namely in respect of unrecovered expenses for the Fisheries Law and Management Advisor position, and the advertisement costs for the positions of Deputy Director and Manager Monitoring Control and Surveillance. In answer to a question from Cook Islands, the Secretariat said that there appeared to be no realistic likelihood of recovering the recruitment expenses.
59. Western Samoa also expressed concern at the over-spending of the 1995 budget. He also noted that the Housing Fund was similarly in deficit. This situation was in complete contrast to assurances and justifications given to the meeting by the Secretariat in seeking establishment of this fund, that it should relieve the FFA budget of the financial burden of subsidising staff housing, and that it was also anticipated that the fund could return a surplus and possibly contribute to FFA income.
60. Nauru expressed a need for the Secretariat to adhere to the Financial Regulations.
61. Western Samoa further drew the attention of the meeting to the over-expenditure in support and administration costs while programmes were under-spent. This indicated that the management had its priorities reversed - whereas the reason for the existence of FFA was to deliver programmes, it was now saving on programmes to finance support services and administration. No other regional organisation was allowed to operate in deficit and member countries disapprove of the practice. To prevent the situation from recurring in the future, he suggested that Financial Regulation 3 (g) which permits a 1 per cent over-expenditure, be deleted.
62. Cook Islands intervened and pointed out that the bulk of the over-expenditure had arisen from a complex misunderstanding over an agreement with the EU. The Chairman responded that he did not consider this as a sufficient excuse, and asked the Director to review very carefully the financial affairs and management of the Secretariat, including the suggestion by Western Samoa to remove Financial Regulation 3 (g), and report back to FFC at its next annual session.
63. The Secretariat proposed for consideration and approval by the Committee two amendments to Financial Regulation 17 be agreed. The first involved Financial Regulation 17 (a) (iv) which read "Funds statement for the fiscal year" be replaced with "Statement of cash flows for the fiscal year" to conform with current accounting practices. This was approved. The second related to Financial Regulation 17 (b) with the Secretariat recommending the removal from the regulation of the requirement that FFA avoid in its accounting the provision for depreciation. This proposal was not approved, Western Samoa making the point that depreciation was a practice designed chiefly for the commercial sector where depreciation was subtracted from gross profit and set aside to finance asset replacement before profits were taxed. As FFA was a non-profit and service organisation which normally provide for asset replacement in its budget, a provision for depreciation was inappropriate.

64. Australia and New Zealand questioned the large discrepancy between the actual and budgeted trust fund income for 1995. The Secretariat advised that this was due to a slower than expected utilisation of trust funded projects, but noted that these funds would be carried over into 1996.
65. The meeting agreed to accept the audited financial reports for 1995, but directed the Secretariat to tighten the accounting procedures during the next year, to ensure the Agency set a good example in terms of financial responsibility.

Member country contributions in arrears, 1995.

66. The Secretariat presented FFC29/12.2. It was pointed out that the paper showed the position as regards contribution arrears as at 31 December 1995. It was confirmed that Tonga had made its outstanding payment since that date, and consequently there was now a nil balance against Tonga. Payments as shown in the paper were still outstanding from Solomon Islands and Nauru. The Chairman pointed out that it would be helpful in future years if a supplementary paper were prepared closer to the meeting to give a more accurate idea of the current position. In relation to the arrears which were outstanding, he issued a plea to the countries concerned that these be settled as soon as possible.

Appointment of Auditors

67. The Secretariat presented FFC29/12.3, and the meeting agreed to the recommendation that the appointment of Goh & Partners should be continued.
68. Western Samoa, in supporting the proposal of the Secretariat, requested that next year, the audited financial report be available in good time before the FFC meeting. The Secretariat mentioned there were some practical difficulties in achieving this, since the Agency's books could not be properly closed until February. The Chairman suggested that the Director should consider this matter. The Corporate Services Division should regard the preparation of the Financial Report and the Budget as a priority. It was necessary for these documents to be considered by the Treasuries of member governments in good time.

Cost of Living Differential Adjustment (COLDA)

69. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/13.1 and FFC29/13.4.
70. In response to a question from New Zealand as to whether or not COLDA applied to gratuities, the Secretariat stated that it only applied to basic salary, not to gratuities.
71. Nauru asked several questions relating to a concern that, although the intent of the SPOCC Review was to reduce the operating costs of regional organisations, the proposed COLDA and housing allowance would have the effect of increasing FFA's operating costs. Nauru was particularly concerned that FFA staff, as a rule, were not overly advantaged or disadvantaged by the introduction of the proposed allowances.
72. In supporting the basis of Nauru's comments, Western Samoa noted that the application of COLDA and housing allowance to each regional organisation should be adaptable to suit the peculiarities of each location. Because of their joint direct effect on staff salary costs the COLDA and housing allowances should be considered together as proposed in the Secretariat's papers. Western Samoa also queried whether 90 percent option was crafted by SPC given its own circumstances.
73. Cook Islands agreed in principle to the application of COLDA, noting that there was room for manoeuvre between 55 and 90 percent application. Cook Islands agreed with Western Samoa that COLDA and the housing allowance issue to be considered in tandem, and reminded the meeting that FFC26 had agreed that this allowance be trialed for a year.

74. New Zealand cautioned the meeting to ensure that the previous FFC decisions on this matter were not re-opened. Recommendations relating to COLDA and housing allowances should be taken in context of the application of an overall package of terms and conditions across the various regional organisations. The issue facing the meeting was how to apply the recommendations in FFA's case.
75. The Chairman called for a reasonable approach to this issue, noting that because of the importance of the fisheries sector to all FFA member countries, salaries and allowance for FFA staff members should not be allowed to lag behind those in place in other regional agencies.
76. The Secretariat provided the meeting with some answers to the questions raised during the discussion. The FFA Director explained that because FFA had not budgeted for increases in staff salaries during 1996, he had decided not to offer new contracts to FFA staff on existing contracts following decisions taken at FFC26 regarding staff allowances. However, he felt a responsibility to existing contract staff to reconsider this issue.
77. Cook Islands suggested that the meeting accept the COLDA proposal and revert to the previous housing rental system where 10 percent deduction was made from staff members' base salary.
78. Western Samoa agreed that there must be fair rewards for staff, but that these must be affordable to be fair also to contributing members.
79. After further discussion, Western Samoa suggested that the proposal put forward by Cook Islands provided the best way forward and a good compromise. He strongly commended this to the meeting, with the amendment that instead of a 10 per cent rent deduction, this be set at 12.5 percent of base salary, considering that FFA houses have three bedrooms, and this was the mid-point of rates applied in other organisations.
80. New Zealand expressed regret that this appeared to be a departure from the aim of achieving a unified system. The removal of the housing allowance was difficult to reconcile with the earlier expressed intention of bringing the regional organisations into line. The position being proposed appeared illogical, and an explanation would be appreciated.
81. The Chairman responded by stating that it seemed one had to look at the total package. Western Samoa agreed with New Zealand that the most contentious aspect of the SPOCC Review of terms and conditions had been the question of housing. The situation also applied to the discussion at FFC26 on housing, and because of that, FFC26 allowed for an annual review to enable the Committee to assess whether the effects of the scheme were practical and to decide accordingly.
82. New Zealand indicated that it would not stand in the way of consensus. It wished, however, to place on record its regret at the decision to move away, at this early stage, from a unified package.
83. The Chairman said that it had to be realised that anomalies would be created by the decision that had to be made. The meeting should leave it to the Director to consider the position, and if necessary, he clearly had the right to address the meeting with regard to any difficulties which could arise at future FFC meetings.
84. The Director responded by saying "I wish to be able to give the option of a new contract to employees, and not simply to have the option of saying 'no' to them".
85. The Secretariat advised that future implications of the proposal which had just been adopted were to the effect that the additional contributions now required from member countries stood at 25 percent rather than 30 percent.

Staff Terms and Conditions

86. The Secretariat presented paper FFC29/13.2. It was indicated that general instructions were sought from the meeting with regard to a possible general review of the FFA Staff Regulations.

It was noted that successive amendments to the Regulations had created various anomalies. There was also some discussion in relation to the suggestion that senior members of staff should be made the subject of longer periods of notice and that non-accountable representational allowance due to the Deputy Director should be increased to a level equivalent to that paid to the Director.

87. Commenting generally on the presentation by the Secretariat, the Chairman found sympathy in the situation confronting the Secretariat in this regard. It was, however, a situation that occasionally arose as terms and conditions, and circumstances change. He was confident however that with guiding comments by delegations, the Secretariat had the capability and was in the best position to undertake a thorough review of the Staff Regulations, to bring these into line with current decisions of the FFC and report back to the meeting for consideration and approval.
88. Western Samoa expressed sympathy for the Secretariat's situation, in respect of the Staff Regulations being unable, in some cases to accommodate various terms and conditions approved by FFC in recent years. He agreed that while the FFC might provide some guidance on the specific areas raised by the Secretariat in its paper, a full review of the Staff Regulations could best be undertaken by the Secretariat, and brought back to the meeting for review and approval. On the specific matters raised by the Secretariat, he agreed with the Secretariat that the long service bonus was adopted for the Forum Secretariat because they had local staff serving permanent contracts. This was not the case at FFA, and should there be no other rationale for it, it should be removed. Compassionate and special leave practice in some other sister organisations was on full pay, and the practice of other SPOCC agencies should guide the Secretariat. In the respect of the determination of the starting salary steps for new appointees, he supported the Director having the discretion to determine this within the approved grade for that post. However, internal guidelines on how this was to be done to ensure transparency and accountability should be put in place. On higher and extra duties allowances, he felt that the Secretariat was in the best position to suggest wording that takes into account their actual difficulty.
89. Western Samoa continued by saying that with regard to notice of termination, he fully shared the concern of the Secretariat and it was perhaps time to look at a three months notice period as commonly practised. He cautioned however, that this also acts the other way when you wish to quickly remove an undesirable employee. On non-accountable representation allowances for the Director and Deputy Director, he was satisfied to leave these at current levels, as this was in addition to the official entertainment vote in the budget. These levels also existed in other regional organisations. In respect of confidentiality provisions, he accepted the wording proposed by the Secretariat.
90. New Zealand agreed with the idea that, taking into account any comments from the meeting, the Secretariat should undertake a thorough review of the Staff Regulations. Amongst other comments on the individual items raised by the Secretariat, New Zealand agreed that the period of notice of termination could be a double-edged sword, but he felt some action should be taken to provide more security to the Secretariat. On the higher duties and non-accountable representation allowances, New Zealand would prefer that the status quo be maintained.
91. Summing up, the Chairman drew the conclusion that the Secretariat was mandated to revise the Staff Regulations, so as to iron out anomalies which had been identified, and so act as a foundation for the review of matters which might require amendment. Furthermore, the Secretariat was asked to give particular consideration to the question of Long-Service Benefit, in light of representations made by Solomon Islands in its country statement. The resulting revised Staff Regulations should be referred to the 1997 FFC for consideration and approval.

Duty Statement for Director and Deputy Director

92. The Secretariat presented paper FFC29/13.3.
93. Western Samoa indicated that it had no problems in approving the duty statements as submitted. A comment was made in passing, however, that if at future meetings revised papers were to be submitted, these should be clearly marked as being revisions.
94. New Zealand indicated that it was generally satisfied, but suggested that paragraph 1 of the Deputy Director's duty statement should be amended to read "supervise the conduct" rather than "assume responsibility for the conduct".
95. Fiji said that there were no substantive problems in agreeing with the two duty statements but the hope was expressed that account would be taken of any changes or developments arising from Future Management Arrangements which were at present being discussed.
96. The Chairman raised the question as to how often it was necessary to re-visit the duty statements. Australia suggested that the statements should be reviewed jointly by FFC every three years. This would mean a review in the third year of each Director's contract term.
97. New Zealand commented that a review every three years was the longest time scale desirable. It felt that such a review should generally be part of an annual review of the FFA Corporate Plan. It was desirable to be looking at such a review every year. It was suggested that in any case, the wording proposed for the review should read "at least" every three years.
98. In answer to a question from the Chairman as to the status of the Corporate Plan, it was firstly confirmed that sections of this appeared in the individual work programmes to be reported upon the agenda. It was also confirmed that the preparation of a further Corporate Plan was to be pursued as a separate exercise.
99. It was agreed, following this discussion, that Rule 4 of the Executive Appointments Rules should be amended to provide for a joint review of both duty statements "at least every three years".
100. The Chairman then raised the matter of the necessity to appoint an Appointments Sub-committee. He was reminded that conventionally, representatives of the resident missions in Honiara made up this committee, in addition to the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman. On referring to Rule 20 of the Executive Appointments Rules, it was noted that this provided for "no less than two, and not more than four" members to be appointed in addition to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. It further noted that this fitted quite conveniently with the number of resident missions, and it was agreed that the Appointments Sub-committee should be formed on this basis.
101. The Chairman also raised the issue by Solomon Islands in its opening statement to the meeting. Namely, a proposal that the voting provisions in relation to the appointment of the Deputy Director or the Director should require a simple majority vote as opposed to a two-thirds majority vote in the absence of a consensus. The Chairman took comments made by Solomon Islands as a motion to this effect, and sought a seconder from the meeting. No seconder for the motion was forthcoming. The Chairman indicated therefore that in his view, the majority appeared satisfied with the status quo.
102. The Deputy Director intervened on a personal note and made a request to the meeting that which ever rules applied, they should be strictly adhered to. He had found the experience of being told that his appointment was in jeopardy, after resigning from his previous employment, and selling his house, extremely disconcerting.
103. The Secretariat enquired as to whether members were satisfied that the selection criteria were adequately set out in the rules for executive appointments. Western Samoa responded that it did

not share the concern that there might be any inadequacies in the rules. These remained a sound basis for making appointments.

Work Programme and Budget Proposals

104. The Secretariat presented the Draft Work Programme and Budget for 1996/97 [FFC29/14.1]. It was pointed out that some figures would need to be reviewed in the light of decisions made earlier in the meeting.
105. Solomon Islands asked about the effect of deducting a service charge from the U.S. Treaty. Twenty-five percent was still a very big increase. The Secretariat responded that if such a deduction was taken into account, the increase would be reduced to approximately 11 percent.
106. New Zealand indicated that it should sound a cautionary note. It noted that the figures had been incorporated in relation to New Zealand's contribution to the General Fund, and that further indicative NZODA figures also appeared. There could be no formal guarantee from New Zealand in relation to these items, which were not based on any prior discussion.
107. Australia stated that it had several concerns over the Draft Work Programme. It noted the large increase in the member country contributions and the small number of donors identified for 1997. Despite Australia's continued commitment to the Agency, it could not guarantee maintenance of funds at the same level for 1996/97. This was not reflected in the Draft Work Programme, indeed, the figures presented appeared to suggest reliance upon an increase in funding from Australia. Australia believed that more effort needed to be given to identifying other donors.
108. Western Samoa sought clarification with regard to the General Fund. It was noted that an increase of USD107,000 was proposed to the approved budget for 1996. An answer was sought as to the reason for this.
109. Papua New Guinea sought information as to whether the OFCF placement at FFA was to be on-going.
110. The Deputy Director made it clear that it was his intention to step up contact with the funding agencies. He thought it appropriate to build bridges with the EU and would be visiting Brussels in the near future. The work in relation to future management arrangements presented a good basis for persuading donors to take a positive view of funding support. It would only be possible to provide services which were covered by available cash.
111. The Secretariat continued by responding to Western Samoa's query, that the main reasons for the increased expenditure in relation to the General Fund, was that the budget had to be prepared for 1996 in February 1995, and the need to provide for unforeseen and emergency expenditure. There had been no basis, therefore, to predict effects that would arise from the Ruhen Report.
112. In response, Western Samoa, while appreciating the arguments put forward, found it difficult to accept these fully, because of the knowledge that SPC also prepare its budget at the same time, and yet was not open to increase its overall budget. Additionally, FFA sought every year to increase its current approved budget. Western Samoa drew the attention of the meeting to several proposed increases in the programme expenditure, ranging from 27 percent to 80 percent, which do not appear to be in keeping with financial regulations stipulating variations to no more than 10 percent.
113. The Deputy Director then took up the specific query raised in relation to the Tuna Industry Advisor. It was confirmed that this position had always been funded on an annual basis. It had, however, been going for six or seven years, and there appeared grounds to hope that this arrangement would continue.

114. The Deputy Director continued that the present climate in which FFA found itself was a very dynamic one. It was extremely difficult to foretell what would happen in the immediate future. This had a direct effect upon the budget and gave rise to the apparently violent changes within its structure.
115. Solomon Islands commented that following the first meeting of the Sub-committee on Member Country Contributions, FFC26 agreed that the funding of certain positions would be phased gradually into the General Fund. It appeared now that everything was happening at once
116. Fiji also referred to the work of this Sub-committee as was raised. Fiji agreed with Solomon Islands' suggestion of the gradual phasing into the General Fund of funding for certain positions.
117. In response, the Secretariat confirmed that the assessment of both Solomon Islands and Fiji was correct. Reference was made to Table 6 in the paper which set out, amongst other things, many of the pressures which existed. The Deputy Director commented that it was clear that the Agency was vulnerable in terms of reliance placed on Australian and New Zealand funding for the Agency. Any significant reduction in aid assistance from these countries would have a direct effect on the ability of the Secretariat to maintain services, and efforts would have to be made to see how sufficient funds could be generated.
118. The Chairman remarked that there was clearly a need to look closely at the 1996/97 budget. Western Samoa agreed that this was necessary and that tough decisions would have to be made. It was hoped that the Director and Deputy Director would be able to offer suggestions as to where the necessary cuts could be made to lighten the burden on member countries, and that would also not unduly hamper the functioning of the Secretariat.
119. Details of the 1996 and 1997 work programmes were considered on a programme-by-programme basis. Discussions on each programme were preceded by a brief presentation from the Secretariat outlining the activities undertaken by that programme during 1995 and an overview of the activities planned for 1997.

Economics and Marketing

120. Papua New Guinea thanked the Secretariat for the brief that had been prepared for its recent access talks and indicated that, as in the case of other FFA countries, it too wished to promote its domestic industry. However, although noting the rationale behind the gradual phasing-out of the Secretariat's in-country participation in access negotiations, Papua New Guinea noted that the presence of a representative from the Secretariat in access talks was at times very helpful.
121. Kiribati, making a general observation on the overall work programme rather than the Economics and Marketing Programme in particular, asked whether a timetable was available for the scheduling of future training courses organised by the Secretariat. The Secretariat advised that such a table would shortly be forwarded to FFA member countries.
122. Tonga expressed its support and appreciation for the work of the programme.

Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Programme

123. Nauru commented on the particular difficulties associated with the placement of one of its observers, whereby the observer travelled to both American Samoa and Guam before returning to Nauru without actually completing a trip. Nauru noted that this situation was more the result of the uncertainties associated with US vessel movements. Nauru also noted that of its three recently trained observers, one was still awaiting a first placement on board a US vessel.
124. Palau expressed appreciation for the recent observer training course held in Koror and noted that the deployment of national observers had already resulted in the detection of illegal fishing activity within Palau's EEZ.

125.Nauru expressed appreciation to New Zealand for the assistance provided by an aerial surveillance patrol during the year in the search for 2 Tuvaluan fishermen in Nauru missing from a fishing trip.

Legal Services, Maritime Boundary Delimitation and Treaty Administration

126.Cook Islands thanked the Secretariat for its assistance in the maritime boundaries area and noted that it expected to obtain the technical data required to finalise its outstanding maritime boundaries by the end of 1996. Cook Islands further stated that once this data was collected it intended to initiate formal delimitation discussions with its island neighbours.

127.Niue similarly lauded the assistance provided by the Maritime Boundaries Co-ordinator and noted that it too looked forward to starting boundary discussions.

128.Nauru advised that it intends to approach Kiribati during the year to initiate boundary negotiations as well as inform Marshall Islands of this intention.

129.Australia noted the high value to FFA member countries from the Maritime Boundaries sub-programme. However, Australia sought information on the planned outputs in some detail from the sub-programme and information on the sub-programme's total budget.

130.The Secretariat noted that AusAID had made a similar request in November 1995 during discussions on the 1996 AusAID submission. The Secretariat reiterated the undertaking made during those discussions to provide this information in association with the 1997 AusAID Submission.

131.Fiji raised the issue of whether the work of the Maritime Boundaries Coordinator might be more effective if the officer was physically placed at SOPAC. In making this suggestion, Fiji noted that access to the equipment and technical materials available at SOPAC might enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Maritime Boundaries Coordinator. Fiji also noted that the position is to remain under FFA control even though stationed within SOPAC. The Committee considered that this suggestion merited further consideration and asked the Director to consult with SOPAC further on this issue.

132.Western Samoa, after noting that this was one of the only two FFA programmes that his government directly benefits from, acknowledged the excellent support and quality of advice that it receives from the Legal Services Programme.

133.In response to a question from Solomon Islands, the Secretariat advised that the Fisheries Law and Management Adviser (FLMA) position is yet to be filled. Several donors had declined invitations to fund the position and it had not proved possible to fund the position through reprioritising the 1996 AusAID submission.

134.The Committee recognised the extreme workload of the legal services programme and noted that this could intensify during the coming year. Several countries put forward suggestions to help alleviate the situation, including:

(a)funding of the FLMA position through use of part of the money formerly allocated by the EU to the VMS programme;

(b)having the current Legal Projects Officer more involved in future management-related activities; and

(c)greater use of consultants.

135.The Director was asked to take note of these various suggestions. In agreeing to this request, the Director referred to an additional option suggested during the third meeting of the FFC Sub-committee on Future Management Arrangements, this being the short-term secondment to the Secretariat of a suitable officer from an FFA member country.

136. Of these various options, the Director stated his clear preference for continuing to seek sufficient funding to make a permanent appointment. The meeting noted the Director's preference and encouraged his continued efforts to locate the required funds.

Information Technology Programme

137. Responding to a question from the Cook Islands, the Secretariat commented that talks have commenced with a Canadian company on the proposed communications study. The proposed study is fully compatible with the development of the regional VMS and the Manager of the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance programme has been fully involved in these discussions.

138. Western Samoa noted that this was the other of the two programmes his country benefits from, mainly through the involvement of programme staff in implementing a project they were funding under PDF. He thanked the Director for the excellent work carried out by his staff and expressed the hope that assistance would continue in the future.

139. Nauru referred to the chart in the paper and sought further details on the training offered to Nauru in 1995 under the Computer Development Support sub-programme. The Secretariat replied that this referred to Nauru's participation in regional training activities. Nauru also expressed appreciation for the in-country library assistance that the Secretariat provided during the year.

140. In response to a comment from the Chairman, the Secretariat noted that much of the newly-developed telecommunications technology offers limited promise to Pacific island countries as it is designed for mass-market, high volume use and as such is either unsuitable or uneconomic in the Pacific islands' context.

Corporate Services Programme

141. Following a question from Nauru, the Secretariat advised that the Corporate Plan was last updated in 1992, that the intention was for it to be reviewed every 3 years, and that the 1995 review had been deferred pending the outcomes of the SPOCC Institutional Review. The review of the FFA Corporate Plan is now planned to be completed before the end of 1996 and will be submitted to FFC for consideration. Australia suggested that the revised Corporate Plan should reflect the need to promote the Secretariat's increased financial independence.

142. Nauru also noted that changing the timing of the Secretariat's financial year to a July-June basis warranted further consideration. The Committee endorsed this suggestion and asked the Secretariat to review the implications of such a change and to bring the matter up again at the next FFC with a detailed proposal for a decision.

143. As directed by the Committee, the Secretariat reviewed the various general fund expenditure items from the proposed 1997 budget. Following this review, a number of general items were identified for which budgeted expenditure could be reduced or deferred without imposing undue restrictions on the Secretariat's overall performance. These included overall reductions in the travel budget, reducing expenditure on communication costs and library purchases, and delaying the replacement of the Director's car until 1998.

144. Tonga sought clarification on the implications of reducing the travel budgets, particularly of the Director and Deputy Director, at a time when they might in fact need to undertake more travel in order to secure additional donor support. In reply, the Deputy Director emphasised that securing additional donor support is a key priority in the immediate term and stated that every effort would be made to ensure that the reduced travel budgets did not affect the attainment of this objective.

145. The Secretariat advised that these reductions, together with the changes in staff terms and conditions, meant that a 10 per cent increase in member country contributions was now required to finance the 1997 budget.

146. In response to a query from Western Samoa, the Secretariat advised that changes in the staff terms and conditions necessitated a revision of the 1997 Housing Fund budget and that this would be circulated to member countries once revised.
147. New Zealand expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for being able to find the required budget cuts but noted that this was the second year in a row in which unrealistic increases in member country contributions had been requested. For future years, New Zealand encouraged the Secretariat to present more realistic budget proposals, based on the best estimates available and setting out priorities and options for matching commitments with resources.
148. Australia expressed its support for New Zealand's views on the need to set priorities. Australia also requested that future budgets give a clear indication of the likely commencement and completion dates of activities, their total budgets and some indication of which tasks might be deferred, should this prove necessary in the event of a shortfall of funds. Furthermore, Australia suggested that work needed to be done to identify alternative funding options for the Secretariat, such as:
- (a) increasing the regional register fees; and
 - (b) given that around \$4m was collected in 1995 in compensation for fisheries violations, formalising the mechanism initiated by Papua New Guinea whereby part of the proceeds from these fines were given to the Secretariat.
149. Responding to these comments, Cook Islands noted that the Secretariat could only propose the prioritising of Secretariat activities and that it was member countries that made the final decision. Cook Islands added that further tinkering with the regional register fee, such as the increase in 1995 from \$100 to \$200, is only a stop-gap measure and that a detailed analysis is required to set a realistic change for the Regional Register fee. The view was expressed that any future increases should be of a substantial nature and not confined to small amounts.
150. On the issue of an enforcement levy, Papua New Guinea advised that it had in the past provided the Secretariat with a share of the proceeds from successful fisheries violations. However, it was stressed that this applied only to those cases that extended beyond Papua New Guinea's jurisdiction.

Current Secretariat Expenditure

151. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/14.2 which indicated the Secretariat's estimated 1996 expenditure, by programme and by sub-programme. It was suggested that this is the type of information that might be useful in future years for prioritising the Secretariat's activities as New Zealand had suggested would be necessary.
152. The Committee noted the contents of the paper.

Budget and Extra-Budgetary Proposals

EC Funding Lomé IV

153. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/15.1.
154. The EC representative noted that there is no scope to fund core staffing positions at the Secretariat under Lomé IV but that there might be scope to fund personnel involved in implementing an approved fisheries project.
155. The Committee authorised the Director to terminate the Financing Agreement associated with the VMS project.

CIDA

156. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/15.2.

157. The Committee noted the paper and encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to attract CIDA funding.

Second Tripartite Review (UNDP)

158. Under the auspices of the second Tripartite Review, representatives from UNDP, FFA member countries, SPC and the FFA Secretariat reviewed the current status and future plans for the Regional Fisheries Support and National Capacity Building Programme (RFSNCBP). UNDP agreed to prepare and circulate the record of proceedings from this meeting to all participants.

Tuna Industry Development Study

159. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/15.4.

160. Tonga requested the Secretariat to provide it with further copies of its confidential country report. Cook Islands noted that its Cabinet would soon be considering a policy paper on fisheries development and that if approved, further in-country work was anticipated. Tonga advised that it too expected to undertake further in-country policy analysis targeted at developing its fisheries sector in the near future.

161. The Committee encouraged the Secretariat to develop details of stages 2 and 3 of the study and authorised the proposed visit to Taiwan to discuss the study with Taiwanese industry and government representatives.

Global Environment Facility

162. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/15.5.

163. The Committee noted the SPREP response outlining the difficulties encountered. UNDP's request for a revision of the Strategic Action Plan in February 1996 has contributed to the slow progress. The meeting directed the FFA Secretariat to continue to work with SPREP to progress the regional project to be submitted to the GEF.

Adoption of the Work Programme and Budget

164. The Committee, on a motion moved by Western Samoa and seconded by Palau, adopted the 1997 work programme and budget as amended including the revised 1996 budget. It was noted that this would involve an estimated increase in member country contributions in the order of 10 per cent for the 1997 financial year.

Technical Report

15th Annual Meeting of the PNA Group

165. Papua New Guinea, as Chairman of the PNA Group, presented the main outcomes from their recently concluded annual meeting. These included: (a) a strong statement recognising PNA's role as promoting the regional position put forward by the full FFA membership; (b) recognition of the service fees as a legitimate charge to the US Treaty; and (c) support for the concept that member country contributions should be linked to the beneficiaries from the tuna resources, but that other factors also need to be considered.

166. A copy of the PNA Chairman's report is annexed as **Attachment W**.

167. The PNA Chairman reported that the PNA Group considered more work was required before deciding how to charge the service fee to the US Treaty. The Committee supported this view and requested the Secretariat to prepare a paper on this issue for consideration at the next annual meeting of the Pacific Island Parties to the Treaty.
168. The PNA Chairman also sought the Secretariat's assistance in preparing a brief for the upcoming OFCF-PNA Symposium, given that the Symposium was likely to examine fisheries management-related issues.
169. New Zealand thanked the PNA group for allowing it to observe their meeting and welcomed its support in developing the proposed longline management consultancy, now approved as an FFC initiative.

US Treaty

170. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/17.2 outlining the results from the 8th Annual Consultation with the United States. Special mention was made of the decision to establish a small group to advance the issue of FFA country nationals being employed on the US vessels, the increased charge for observer placements, and the strengthening of the US fisheries enforcement capabilities in Guam.
171. The Committee noted the contents of the paper.

10th Regional Fisheries Surveillance Officers' Meeting

172. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/17.3
173. Particular attention was given to the problems experienced with the implementation of the Maritime Surveillance Communications Network (MSCN) and the subsequent recommendation from the Surveillance Officers meeting to reallocate resources employed to maintain the MSCN to VMS-related issues. It was also noted that Australian funding for the MSCN communication costs will cease at the end of 1996.
174. The Director advised that the physical equipment associated with the MSCN will remain in countries and will be available to countries for alternative uses. However, countries will need to bear any costs associated with maintaining the system. Similarly, after 31 December, countries will also be responsible for meeting all communication costs associated with the network. The Director agreed to keep countries advised of these developments and to officially communicate with FFA member countries on the effective date of termination of the MSCN project.
175. The Secretariat advised that the next annual Surveillance Officers Meeting is tentatively planned to be held in New Zealand and that arrangements for the meeting will be relayed to FFA member countries following further discussions between the Secretariat and New Zealand.
176. New Zealand also asked what, if any, plans the Secretariat had for future contact with France on surveillance matters. The Secretariat replied that in relation to the two previous aerial surveillance meetings to which the French had been invited but which they had not attended, the record of meeting had been supplied with a covering letter from the Director expressing regret at their non-attendance and encouraging future involvement.

VMS

177. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/17.4.
178. Cook Islands advised that the EU has recently completed its VMS trial using the Inmarsat C system and that the Deputy Director might be able to obtain some information on the results of this trial during his forthcoming trip to Brussels.

179. Australia supported the need to consider options to cover the operating costs of the VMS system. The Committee noted that is an issue that will need further analysis in the future.
180. Fiji expressed appreciation for the work done by the Secretariat and expressed its eagerness to implement the VMS system in view of the more effective monitoring of foreign vessels that would result.
181. The Committee noted the contents of the paper and thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensiveness of the paper.

Mini-legal report

182. The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/17.5.
183. Papua New Guinea advised that the fleet of Filipino purse seiners at the centre of the transshipment issue has agreed to gradually restructure their operations, to phase out their existing practices and, most importantly, to become genuinely locally-based within Papua New Guinea. In the meantime, it was emphasised that these vessels are operating under very strict regulations, including the mandatory use of local at-sea observers.
184. Niue congratulated the Secretariat on the completion of the model subsidiary agreement under the Niue Treaty and advised that it intends approaching Tonga to discuss the possible development of a joint agreement.
185. The meeting agreed that domestic vessels should not be included on the Regional Register and that countries address the harmonisation of domestic fisheries legislation to ensure consistency in the definition of domestic vessels.
186. Solomon Islands expressed the view that foreign fishing vessels, whether licensed under bilateral access agreements or based in the ports of FFA member countries, are still foreign fishing vessels and are required to be in good standing on the Regional Register.
187. New Zealand advised that some of the suggested changes, such as a register of vessels with 'bad standing', might not be consistent with various elements of some countries' domestic legislation. The Secretariat responded that although simple in principle, there were many possible legal implications that would need to be considered before such changes could be implemented.
188. The Committee noted the contents of the report and commended the Secretariat for the quality of the paper.

ACIAR Report

189.The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/17.6.

190.The Committee noted the contents of the paper.

Relations with other organisations**FAO**

191.In reference to working paper FFC29/18.1, the Committee directed the Secretariat to continue liaising with FAO on the matters raised.

SPC

192.The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/18.2.

193.The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated the FFA and SPC secretariats for developing the strong relationship that exists between the two organisations as evidenced by the Colloquium report. Given the difficult financial situation facing the FFA Secretariat, the Director was asked to consider the potential for lessening the budgetary impact of the Colloquium by timing the meeting to coincide with SPOCC meetings.

SPOCC

194.The Secretariat presented working paper FFC29/18.3.

195.New Zealand commented that there was a need to clarify the status of SPOCC decisions (paragraph 7b of the paper). The Director stated that the frequency of SPOCC meetings was of particular concern, noting that there had been 4 or 5 SPOCC meetings in the last 18 months.

196.At the invitation of the Chairman, the representative from the Forum Secretariat recognised that there had been a lot of meetings in recent times. However, as the permanent Chair of SPOCC, the Forum Secretariat advised that procedures are now more focused and the intention is to schedule only one substantive SPOCC meeting per year. Forum Secretariat also reiterated the position that SPOCC has no intention of assuming a decision-making role and that it could not usurp the power or pre-empt the decisions of its members' respective governing councils. SPOCC was, however, responsible for co-ordinating advice from regional secretariats to their respective governing councils on issues of common interest.

Other matters**Candidature for FAO Position**

197.Australia advised that it had endorsed a candidate, Mary Harwood, for the position of Assistant Director General of Fisheries in the FAO. Australia advised that while it would be approaching countries individually through its various diplomatic missions to seek their support, it also hoped that FFC would be able to support this candidature.

Additional NZODA Grant

198.New Zealand advised the Committee that while the details had not yet been fully worked out it could be reported with pleasure that New Zealand would be able to make an additional special financial contribution to progress future management arrangements.

Next meeting

199. Tuvalu provisionally agreed, subject to Cabinet approval, to host the next annual FFC meeting. The Committee agreed that this meeting will be held in the first week of May. The Committee noted one option might be for Tuvalu to host the meeting at the FFC Secretariat. Arrangements for the next meeting will be subject to discussions between Tuvalu and the Secretariat.

Record of Proceedings

200. The Committee, on a motion moved by New Zealand and seconded by Western Samoa, adopted this record of proceedings.

Close of meeting

201. Australia, on behalf of the drafting committee responsible for the record of proceedings, thanked the Secretariat for the quality and timeliness of the daily draft summaries provided to the drafting committee.

202. New Zealand, on behalf of FFA member countries, thanked the Chairman for the leadership and guidance that he had provided to the meeting. New Zealand noted the meeting had made substantial progress on a wide range of complex and demanding issues and considered that the style and tact displayed by the Chairman had been a key factor contributing to this success.

203. New Zealand also thanked the Government and the people of Tonga for the overwhelming hospitality that all delegates had experienced since their arrival. Special thanks were given to the staff from the Ministry of Fisheries. New Zealand also thanked the Director and staff of the Secretariat for their untiring efforts throughout the week.

204. On a personal note, the leader of the New Zealand delegation noted that this would most likely be his last FFC meeting and expressed his sincere thanks to delegates for the support and friendliness that he had experienced over the years.

205. Tonga thanked New Zealand for its kind words and the FFA Secretariat for the help that it had provided in organising the meeting. Tonga hoped that all delegates had enjoyed their visit to Tonga and wished delegates a safe journey home.

206. The Chairman declared the meeting closed.

ATTACHMENT A

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE

TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 - 17 May 1996

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**AUSTRALIA**

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Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade

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East Coast Pelagic Fisheries
Australian Fisheries Management
Authority

Mr. Dominic Johnson
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Pacific Multilateral and Regional Section
AusAID

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Department of Primary Industries &
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Ministry Of Marine Resources

**FEDERATED STATES OF
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Micronesian Maritime Authority

FIJI

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Director of Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forests
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Principal Assistant Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. S Tuilaucala
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KIRIBATI

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Mr. Danny Wase
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NAURU

ATTACHMENT A

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Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

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Desk Officer
Regional Organisations
Ministry of Foreign affairs

Mr. Transform Aqorau
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

TONGA

Akau'ola
Secretary For Fisheries
Ministry of Fisheries

Mr. Taniela Koloa
Head of Delegation
Principal fisheries Officer
Ministry of Fisheries

Mr. Tevita Finau Latu
Fisheries Officer
Ministry of Fisheries

ATTACHMENT A

Mr. Siola'a Malimal
Technical Officer
Ministry of Fisheries

Mr. Anitimoni Petelo
Fisheries Officer
Ministry of Fisheries

Mr. Foth Fisiahi
Senior Executive Officer
Ministry of Labour, Commerce &
Industries

TUVALU

Mr. Simeiti Lopati
Secretary
Ministry of Natural Resources

Mr. Sautia Maluofenua
Director of Fisheries
Ministry of Natural Resources

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Mr. Paul A. Sami
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Pago Pago

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Marine Studies Programme

WPRFMC

ATTACHMENT A

Mr. Edwin A. Ebisui, Jnr
Chairman

FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY

Mr. Victorio Uherbelau
Director

Mr. Ian Cartwright
Deputy Director

Mr. George Beck
Project Development Appraisal Advisor

Mr. Grant Boyes
Maritime Boundary Coordinator

Mr. Tony Kingston
Manager Economics and Marketing

Ms. N. Barbara Hanchard
Executive Officer.

Mr. Felix Panjubo
Multilateral Treaty Manager

Mr. David Phillips
Legal Counsel

Mr. Andrew Richards
Manager Monitoring Control and
Surveillance

Mr. Sam Taufao
Information Technology Manager

Mr. Uale Rea
Corporate Services Manager

RESOURCE PERSONNEL

Mr. Tu'a Taumoepeau-Tupou

Mr. Alfred Sasako

ATTACHMENT B

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE

TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 - 17 May 1996

OPENING SPEECH : FORUM FISHERIES CONFERENCE MEETING

AT NEIAFU, VAVA'U

(BY, GOVERNER OF VAVA'U HON. TU'I'AFITU)

FAKATAPU KI HE 'OTUA MAFIMAFI
 KO E MATAVAI MO E FAUNITENI 'O E LEILEI FULI PE
 FAKATAPU KI HE TAMA KO PILINISI 'ULUKALALA
 HOU'EIKI MAKAPUNA 'O 'ULUKALALA 'I VAVA'U LAHI
 HA'A FALEFISI SINA'E TAKALAU
 FAKATAPU KI HE FAKAFOFONGA 'O E EUROPEAN UNION ' TONGA NI
 PEHE KI HE TU'I FAKAMAAU LAHI
 HOA 'O 'AKAU'OLA MO E HOU'EIKI FAFINE
 HA'A HAVEA (SI'D), HA'A NGATATUPU, FALEHA'AKILI
 FOKOLOLO-E-HAU, HA'A MATAPULE MO E KAINGA KOTOA

FAKAFETA'I KI HE TA'EHAMAI 'ENE FOAKI IVI MO FAKATOKAMALIE 'O
 FAKAHOKO AI E FAKATAHA 'EIKI NI HE HOTELE PUATALEFUSI 'I
 NEIAFU
 VAVA'U PEA 'OKU FAKAHISITOLIA 'ENI PEA 'OKU FONU AI HOTAU LOTO
 'I HE FIEFIA MO E MAFANA. KO IA AI 'OKU TA'ATA'ALO 'A TEISINA
 KI HE SIA-KO-KAFOA, 'ALO-'I-TALAU MO TAVAKE-FAI-'ANA. MALU
 PE NGAHI 'UTU MALU'I 'O E VAHEFONU LANUMATA PE FOUNA.
 FAKA'OFO'OFI PE 'OTUMOTU MO E NGAHI FANGA. 'OTU MOTU LALO,
 KO ' 'AKAU'OLA IA MO E WIND (MATANGI) FAKAMO'UI SINO. VAI-KO
 LELEA MO E TAULANGA PUATALEFUSI. MALU TOKA E TAULANGA U.
 'ISA KUO HUNI E LOLO-'A-HALAEVALU.

'AHO FAKAHISITOLIA 'ENI HE KUO MATANGI MALIE HOTAU 'AHO PEA
 TAULUA
 E MATANGI - TONGA HAHAKE MO TOKELAU HAHAKE TAU FOLAU A HE
 KO
 E KOLOA PE 'A E MATANGI. KO 'AKAU'OLA IA MO E FOKOLOLO.

'UHINGA 'O E FOKOLOLO-E-HAU
 (KO E "KIE" E HAU) KIE - FETA'U E HAU 'UHINGA IA KI HE MUIMUI,
 MATEAKI, PEA KANONI'AKI E LOTO'AKI.

HANGE KO E HIMI 657 VEESI 4 'A IA 'OKU PEHE:
 MALO E 'OMI HA FONUA
 FE'UNGA MO E KAKAI

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MA'U NGOFUA HE ME'A KOTOA
KE INU PE MO KAI
KO E KELEKELE MAHU E, PEA KA HALA IA
'E LAU 'E HAI HOMAUA KOLOA
'E MA'U MEI TAHI NA

TAMA TONGA TU'U 'O NGAUE
HO KOLOA KE FAKAMONU

TAU KAU MO KOE ('OTUA) HE KAHA'U
PEA 'E HULUNOA
'A E MONU'IA, MO E LELEI 'A TONGA MANAKOA

HON. CHAIRMAN OF THE FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE,
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES OF THE NATIONS OF THE PACIFIC,
THE DIRECTOR OF THE FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY AND MEMBERS OF
HIS STAFF,
OBSERVERS FROM THE REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF REGION,
THE SECRETARY FOR FISHERIES AND STAFF OF THE MINISTRY,
MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL FISHING COMMUNITY,
HONOURED GUESTS.

WELCOME TO VAVA'U TO PEARL OF TONGA. WE, THE PEOPLE OF THIS
ISLAND KINGDOM ARE HONOURED THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN
TO HOLD THIS HISTORIC MEETING IN THE PARADISE HOTEL, IN WHAT
MORRELL

APPLY NAMED THE PORT OF REFUGE NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS
AGO,

WHEN HE HAD TO RUN BEFORE THE AWESOME MIGHT OF THE PACIFIC
IN ITS LESS GENTLER MOOD.

I BID YOU WELCOME IN THE NAME OF TAUFU'AHAU TUPOU IV KING OF
TONGA AND HIS PEOPLE AND I FULFIL THIS PLEASURABLE TASK ON
BEHALF OF BARON VAEA OF HOUMA PRIME MINISTER AND THE
MINISTER OF FISHERIES WHO HAS HAD TO HEED THE CALL OF
ANOTHER OF OUR REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS IN OUR CLOSEST
NEIGHBOUR TO THE NORTH APIA THE FAIR CAPITAL OF WESTERN
SAMOA.

THIS OCCASION IS A LANDMARK FOR THE PEOPLE OF VAVA'U. IT IS NOT
OFTEN THAT WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY HOST TO THE
REGION

AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, SO THAT THE BEAUTY THAT IS
LOCKED IN THESE MYSTICAL ISLANDS IS ONLY REVEALED TO THE
MORE ADVENTUROUS TRAVELLER WHO IS NOT AFRAID TO EXPLORE
THE LESSER

KNOWN BYE WAYS OF OUR PACIFIC HOME.

I KNOW THAT THE PEOPLE OF VAVA'U WILL OPEN THEIR HEARTS AND

ATTACHMENT B

THEIR HOMES TO YOU SO THAT POVERTY IN THE MORE MATERIALISTIC POSSESSIONS OF LIFE MIGHT BE COMPENSATED FOR BY THEIR SIMPLE EXPRESSION OF LOVE AND WARM REGARD. GHANDI ONE OF THE IMMORTALS OF WORLD CIVILIZATION OBSERVED THAT THERE ARE NO STRANGERS IN THIS WORLD - ONLY FRIENDS THAT HAVE YET TO MEET. THIS IS HOW WE THE PEOPLE OF VAVA'U WOULD WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR PRESENCE.

THIS MORNING AND FOR THE WHOLE OF THIS WEEK, YOU WILL BE LOCKED IN DELIBERATIONS WHICH WILL HAVE THE GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE FOR ALL OUR PACIFIC PEOPLE, FOR YOU ARE THE GUARDIANS OF OUR JOINT WEALTH, THE RICHES OF THE SEA. FOR THE MAJORITY OF OUR SMALL ISLAND NATIONS, FISH AND THE PRODUCTS OF THE SEA WILL BE THE MAJOR SOURCE AVAILABLE TO US OF FOOD TO PROVIDE A BALANCED AND NOURISHING DIET AND TO FUEL THE ENGINE OF DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL MAKE BETTER HEALTH AND EDUCATION MORE READILY AVAILABLE TO OUR PEOPLE.

WE HAVE NOW ENTERED A NEW ERA WHEN THESE RICHES WHICH WE ALWAYS TOOK FOR GRANTED ARE NOW THE SUBJECT OF WORLD DISCUSSION, INDEED OF WORLD NEGOTIATIONS. HERE IN THE SHELTER OF VAVA'U YOU WILL DEVELOP THE STRATEGIES THAT WILL ALLOW US TO TAKE OUR RIGHTFUL SHARE OF THIS WEALTH, WHILE DEVISING MEANS TO ALLOW OTHER MORE DISTANT NATIONS TO HARVEST OUR SEAS FOR THE NEEDS OF THEIR PEOPLE. ALL OF US HAVE IN COMMON THE GREATEST TRAITS OF SEAFARING PEOPLE - THE IMPERATIVE TO SHARE, FOR IN THIS COLLECTIVE FORM OF SECURITY LIES THE GREATEST CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL, NOT JUST FOR US BUT FOR THE FISHING COMMUNITIES OF THE WORLD AND FOR THE FISH STOCKS OF WHICH WE ARE GUARDIAN. I KNOW THAT YOU WILL AGAIN SHOW THE GREAT QUALITIES THAT HAVE ALLOWED US TO EXIST AND TO ROAM THESE OCEANS AT WILL, CHARTERING OUR COURSE FOR THE FUTURE.

I DON'T NEED TO EMPHASIS TO YOU THAT THE FATE OF OUR YOUNG AND GENERATIONS THAT WILL FOLLOW HINGE ON THE OUTCOME OF YOUR TALKS. WE ARE BEHIND YOU TO GIVE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT AND TO HELP IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. SOMETIMES THE GREATEST HELP WE CAN GIVE IS TO STAY OUT OF YOUR WAY SO THAT YOU CAN GET ON WITH THE TASK AT HAND.

AND WHEN THE DAYS WORK IS DONE, MAY I INVITE YOU TO SHARE IN ALL THAT WE HAVE TO OFFER IN NATURAL BEAUTY THAT WE HAVE IN ABUNDANCE, FROM THE FLOWERS THAT SCENT THE AIR, TO THE GREEN THAT DRESSES THE ISLANDS, AND THE BEACHES THAT DEFY DESCRIPTION. BUT MOST OF ALL I OFFER TO YOU THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN PEACE WITH THEMSELVES AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT. LINGER AWHILE AND LET THE MAGIC OF THE MOMENT

ATTACHMENT B

LESSEN THE BURDEN OF STRESS AND ANXIETY THAT ARE NOW PART
AND PARCEL OF MODERN DAY DEVELOPMENT.

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO DECLARE THE TWENTY NINTH
FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE OPEN AT NELAFU, VAVA'U IN THE
KINGDOM OF TONGA.

ATTACHMENT C

**FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING**

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 -17 May 1996

**RESPONSE AND VOTE OF THANKS BY THE DISTINGUISHED DELEGATE FOR
TUVALU**

Honourable Governor,

May I, on behalf of the delegates of the sixteen member countries of the Forum Fisheries Committee, offer you our sincere thanks for the address you have just delivered.

We have all been overwhelmed by the tranquillity and beauty of our surroundings since our arrival, and your warm welcome has added yet more to the pleasure we feel in being here.

Thank you.

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**FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING****Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga**

13 -17 May 1996

OUTGOING CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Before looking briefly at the progress that FFA has achieved during the last year, I would like to pay tribute to the hard work put into the Agency for several years by the former Deputy Director, Mr Drew Wright, who left the employ of the Agency in October 1995. I would also like to welcome the new Deputy Director, Mr Ian Cartwright, to this his first Forum Fisheries Committee meeting.

This last year has been significant for the workload it has placed on both country delegates and the Secretariat. There have been three FFC meetings, and three meetings of the FFC Sub-committee on Future Management Arrangements. The importance of the outcomes of these Sub-committee meetings to the co-operative development of effective management measures to protect the valuable resources of the region whilst in-zone and in collaboration with non FFA States, over the full range of the stock, cannot be underestimated.

Reinforcing these initiatives, the UN Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks completed its work, and the FAO finalised a comprehensive Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing.

The Palau and FSM Arrangements both entered into force during the last year. These Agreements are a reflection of the ability of FFA countries to band together and agree sound measures to promote the conservation and management of the tuna, while ensuring that the returns to the countries are maximised through domestic industry development.

If we are to maintain our efforts to secure and benefit from our rightful share of the region's tuna stocks, and still enjoy the other valuable services currently provided by the FFA, it is clear that we must develop strategies to generate adequate funding.

The second Sub-committee on Member Country Contributions have provided recommendations on this issue, and I commend them to you for your attention.

Finally, I would like to thank the distinguished delegates to FFC for their valuable contributions during the year, and thank the Secretariat for providing efficient and effective technical and other support.

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE

TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 - 17 May 1996

AGENDA

- a. Opening of Meeting.
- b. Election of Chairman.
- c. Apologies.
- d. Adoption of agenda.
- e. Application for membership.
- f. Applications for observer and guest status.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND MATERIAL

- 1. COUNTRY STATEMENTS**
- 2. DIRECTOR'S REPORT 1995/1996**
- 3. STATEMENTS BY SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS, OBSERVERS AND GUESTS**
- 4. ISSUES ARISING FROM RECENT FFC MEETINGS**
- 5. STATUS OF VARIOUS REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS**
- 6. STATUS OF TUNA STOCKS**

SECTION II: POLICY ISSUES¹

- 7. FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**
 - 7.1 FFC Sub-committee on Future Management Arrangements
 - 7.2 Proposed Regional Strategy for the Technical Consultation on the Collection and Exchange of Fisheries Data, Tuna Research and Stock Assessment
 - 7.3 Sub Regional Longline Multilateral Arrangement and other Longline Issues.
- 8. FFC SUB-COMMITTEE ON MEMBER COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS**
- 9. CONSIDERATION OF THE SPOCC REVIEW OF REGIONAL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MARINE SECTOR**
- 10. REVIEW OF FFA MEMBERSHIP POLICY**

¹ It is proposed that all agenda items in Section II will be held in closed session.

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11. SOLOMON ISLANDS DEBIT TAX ACT 1995 and FOREIGN EXCHANGE TRANSACTION LEVY 1995**SECTION III: ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES****12. FINANCIAL**

- 12.1 Financial Report for the year ending 31 December 1995.
- 12.2 Member Country Contributions in Arrears, 1995.
- 12.3 Appointment of Auditors.

13. ESTABLISHMENT

- 13.1 COLDA (Cost of Living Differential Adjustment).
- 13.2 Staff Terms and Conditions.
- 13.3 Duty Statements for FFA Executive Positions
- 13.4 Housing Scheme - Annual Review 1995

14. WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

- 14.1 Draft Work Programme and Budget 1996/97.
- 14.2 Current Secretariat Expenditure

15. BUDGET AND EXTRA-BUDGETARY PROPOSALS

- 15.1 EC Funding Lome IV
- 15.2 CIDA - CSPODP Phase II.
- 15.3 Tripartite Review of RFSNCP (UNDP).
- 15.4 Tuna Industry Development Study (ADB Study).
- 15.5 Global Environment Facility (GEF).

16. ADOPTION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET**17. TECHNICAL REPORTS**

- 17.1 15th Annual Meeting of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement.
- 17.2 Treaty on Fisheries: 8th Annual Consultation with the United States.
- 17.3 10th Regional Fisheries Surveillance Officers Meeting.
- 17.4 Status Report on Regional Vessel Monitoring System (VMS).
- 17.5 Mini Legal Consultation.
- 17.6 ACIAR Report.

18. RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

- 18.1 FAO.
- 18.2 SPC (5th FFA/SPC Colloquium).
- 18.3 SPOCC.

19. OTHER MATTERS

- g. Next meeting.
- h. Records of proceeding.
- i. Close of the meeting.

Australian country statement

Mr Chairman, FFA Director, esteemed delegates, ladies and gentlemen. Before making some general comments, I would like to congratulate our new Chairman and wish him well over the coming week, and to thank the Government of the Kingdom Tonga for hosting this meeting. The Australian delegation greatly appreciates the warm hospitality we have enjoyed over the past week, and the opportunity we have had to see some of your beautiful country. We also thank the previous Chair, Papua New Guinea, for guiding us through an eventful year.

The Australian Government congratulates the new Deputy Director, Mr. Ian Cartwright, on his appointment to this important job, and assures him of our full support and cooperation.

Australia thanks the FFA Director and his staff for the enormous effort they have again put into PNA and FFC meetings - an effort we recognise to be critical to an effective and focussed discussion of the issues. This is particularly important in the contemporary climate of human and financial resource constraints, where all our governments are finding it increasingly difficult to spare key officials and scarce funds for lengthy regional meetings. Sound finances will be crucial to the continuing effectiveness of the FFA. In this respect, we welcomed the outcomes of the FFC sub-committee on member country contributions and hope to see its recommendations implemented.

The past year has seen a great deal of work done in regional fisheries matters, and there is much work still to be done. In particular the work done by the FFC sub-committee on future management arrangements has taken a high priority in terms of members' efforts and secretariat time. The recent signals from Japan and the United States that the distant water fishing nations may attempt to form their own conservation and management organisation for North Pacific tuna stocks only increases the pressure on us to improve our own management regimes within our own EEZs. It underlines the urgent need for us to be in a position to engage distant water fishing nations and other, non-FFA, coastal states and territories in meaningful dialogue, consistent with the provisions of the UN Implementing Agreement, and be prepared to discuss matters relating to the management of tuna stocks that recognise neither boundaries between nations nor international waters.

Again, Mr Chairman, we cannot emphasise enough the importance of establishing arrangements which provide for long term sustainable management of the tuna resources in our region, in a way which ensures the economic well-being of Pacific islands countries. The UN Implementing Agreement and the Law of the Sea Convention are vital instruments in this regard. They afford significant opportunities to maximise our benefits from fisheries resources, and to oblige fishing states to ensure their fleets behave responsibly. In order to realise those benefits, however, Mr Chairman, FFA members must do much work to ensure that we have a clear understanding of what we want from distant water fishing fleets and their flag states, and how we are to obtain this. We also need a clear understanding of what obligations we as coastal states are prepared to undertake for the sake of sustainable stock management. These positions will need to be established well before we sit down with distant water fishing nations in a multilateral consultation, in order to ensure we retain control of the process. They should also be consistent with the guidance received from our Forum Leaders.

Mr. Chairman, Australia continues to believe that the region's greatest strength in protecting the fisheries interests of its members lies in the cohesion and cooperation that exists between Forum Countries. In this respect, we hope that the collective approach that has served us so well in the United Nations and in existing regional arrangements can be strengthened.

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Collective action in encouraging domestication - seen in the Federated States of Micronesian Arrangement - can also provide benefits over the longer term. Genuine domestication, however, will

take some time to achieve, and no regional agreement can substitute for domestic economic policies that foster private sector investment and international competitiveness.

In all of this, Mr Chairman, the onus of action lies with each of us as individual states to manage our own resources sustainably and to develop them in a way that maximises the benefits to our people. Along with our sovereign right to control our resources, comes our sovereign responsibility to manage what we have in a way that ensures continuing benefit for future generations. FFA countries have led the world in cooperation in the management of our fisheries resources. Let us ensure that we maintain the initiative.

Monitoring, control and surveillance are crucial elements in management of our fisheries resources, and in this respect Australia is encouraged by progress on the regional vessel monitoring system. We hope this will encourage significantly improved monitoring and control of fishing effort in the region. In view of the potential benefits to be had from the system, we hope also that all member countries will invest the resources required to maintain its effective operation over the long term.

Finally, Mr Chairman, we expect a great deal from FFA over the coming year. Let me once again register Australia's full support for the Agency and our appreciation for the secretariat's huge effort under difficult circumstances over the past year. This meeting has a full agenda of substantial issues, and Australia looks forward to concrete outcomes by the end of it. Thank you.

ATTACHMENT G

FIJI

COUNTRY STATEMENT

Thank you Mr Chairman.

In the absence of our leader of delegation, Mr Kunatuba who is expected to arrive later this morning, I have the pleasure to deliver our country statement.

The Fiji delegation would like to begin by congratulating you Mr Chairman on your election and wishing you a successful and rewarding chairmanship. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to your Government for the excellent hospitality accorded us thus far, and for all that is being planned for the rest of the week. Be assured of Fiji's wholehearted support of the FFA's procurement during your chairmanship.

We would also like Mr Chairman, to offer a big thank you to the Government of Papua New Guinea, as outgoing chair of FFC. We thank you for a task well done.

To the Director of the FFA, the new Deputy Director, Mr Ian Cartwright, to whom Fiji offers a special welcome and all the staff of the Agency, our deep appreciation for all your efforts this past year. To you all a big vinaka vakalevu from the Fiji delegation.

This last year has seen rapid developments in international matters, which have major implications for Fisheries management in the region. The adoption and signing of the UN Implementing Agreement in December has paved the way for more complex and sophisticated Fisheries management arrangements.

Mr Chairman, the conclusion of the UN agreement has compelled us to work as quickly as possible to demonstrate to the international community that effective fisheries management arrangements are in place in our region.

The delegation, Mr Chairman fully believes, that it is essential that we ensure that such arrangements are in place at the earliest opportunity and that these comply with international requirements. It is to our advantage Mr Chairman, that we do so quickly thereby consolidating our control of our tuna resources and achieve their sustainable management.

Mr Chairman, Fiji is not happy with the rather complacent attitude with which we are addressing this issue. We need to step-up our efforts in this area, and be more focused in our approach to this issue. We would like to elaborate further on this if necessary with a paper at the appropriate time on the Agenda.

This delegation firmly stands behind the decisions of our leaders at the Brisbane Forum, which we believe are still very much appropriate despite all the changes that have occurred since. The Forum agreed that:

- We must strive to ensure the sustainable exploitation of our tuna stocks
- We must work on increasing economic benefits to the region for its fisheries resources
- We must cooperate to enhance surveillance and enforcement

ATTACHMENT G

- We must ensure that FFA is given enough financial support to meet increasing demands of members.
- We must develop a multilateral approach to regulatory access to the region's fisheries resources.

At the FFC26 in Port Morsby PNG' Minister for Finance, in his keynote address when opening the meeting said and I quote:

“The Forum Fisheries Agency has become too dependent on funding, particularly at a time when many aid donors are beginning to face financial restrictions of their own. This has provided no security for the Agency to effectively service the needs of the member countries. I do hope that this committee will find ways to improve the funding security for the Agency, so that it will again effectively service its member countries” end of quote.

In light of the above, Mr Chairman Fiji supports efforts to seek greater commitment from members for the functioning of this Agency. In this regard we fully endorse the work of the sub-committee on member country contributions and would push for more support for its work, such that an equitable distribution of the running costs of the Agency be quickly arrived at. At the end of the day, the choice is ours. If we want an effective secretariat then we have to pay for it. The user pay concept is fully endorsed by this delegation.

While on this central issue of funds Fiji, Mr Chairman, would like to again at this stage, given difficulty to secure extra budgetary support, to remind the Committee of a proposal we have continuously raised at most of our regional meetings. We are again Mr Chairman, seeking FFA member countries consideration of the use of a proportion of the total US catch, particularly that part owing to the High Seas as a source of funding for the Secretariat. We still believe that a portion of the catch, for which all FFA member countries have an equal say should be used to support the Agency's work programme. Again we would like to elaborate further if necessary at the appropriate time on the Agenda.

Mindful of the length of the Agenda, Mr Chairman, we would contribute our thoughts on other items on the Agenda at their appropriate time.

I thank you Mr Chairman.

FFC29

COUNTRY STATEMENT

NAURU

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation from Nauru, I wish to extend our good wishes and compliments to the people of the Kingdom of Tonga on your beautiful Pacific island kingdom and to express our appreciation for the warm and friendly hospitality extended to us by the beautiful people of Tonga.

May I congratulate you Mr. Chairman on your election to the FFC Chairmanship for this meeting and for the next 12 months and we look forward to working with you as we, the FFA member countries go forth to establish regimes for the proper development, management, conservation and sustainable use of our tuna resources in our zones and in the Central Western Pacific as a whole.

The next 12 months could be very proving in our coming to terms with the financial and staffing needs of the Agency for the Agency to be able to meet the challenges ahead of putting in place appropriate and effective management arrangements of the tuna fisheries resources within the zones of the FFA member countries and for this process to be given the utmost priority, and also to open up a consultative process with the Distant Water Fishing Nations, in compliance with the requirements of the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention and the associated Implementing Agreement.

The Agency will need additional staff and additional funding to be able to meet its obligations on future management arrangements.

Nauru will support proposals for a system of cost recovery from vessel operators to be developed as a matter of urgency, to secure the funding needs of the Agency for the long term.

Nauru will also support the use of the US Treaty funds in the short to medium term of 3 - 5 years, to meet certain funding requirements of the Agency, such as the US Treaty related service charges of the FFA Secretariat, as well as the

ATTACHMENT H

cost of developing and hopefully implementing the proposed future management arrangements, should funding from other sources be not secured in time to progress our efforts to achieve effective future management arrangements of the region's tuna resources.

Furthermore, Nauru would suggest that consideration be given to the utilization of percentage of the annual US Treaty payment of US\$18 million, as a form of security funding for certain funding requirements of the Agency related to the US Treaty service charges by the FFA Secretariat, and the future management arrangements, until alternative sources of funding are secured for the long time, and for the allocation to be deducted before the 15/85 % distribution.

In closing Mr. Chairman, may I take this opportunity to thank also the outgoing Chairman, Papua New Guinea, for ably guiding the businesses of the FFC for the past 12 months, and last but not least, the FFA Secretariat for their technical and professional workmanship for the Agency.

We look forward to participation in the meeting and wish the meeting a successful outcome on its many and important deliberations.

Thank you.

FFC29
COUNTRY STATEMENT: NEW ZEALAND

Mr Chairman

May we begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the Forum Fisheries Committee. Your contribution will be important both for our present meeting and for the coming year, which will be a highly significant one for the future of fisheries in our region. We wish you well as you take up your year of office. Please be assured of our support. We also thank the outgoing Chairman for a year's work well done.

We are indeed fortunate to be meeting on this lovely island of Vava'u-Uta. We would like to thank the Government of Tonga for giving us the opportunity to come here, and for the excellent arrangements that have been made.

The past year has been a difficult one for the Forum Fisheries Agency. We appreciate the efforts that the Agency's staff have made to keep the Agency functioning effectively at a time of staff shortages and of an increasing, and increasingly complex, workload. The selection and appointment of a new Deputy Director has been a significant step forward. We wish the new Deputy Director well in his assignment.

Membership Contributions

A significant development during the past year has been the holding of a second meeting of the FFC sub-committee on member country contributions. New Zealand attaches considerable importance to the work of this sub-committee, and in particular to the development of a formula for assessing membership contributions that reflects the extent to which member countries benefit from the Agency's services while also taking account of each country's ability to pay. While recognising that it is probably unrealistic to expect the combined contributions of the island country members of the FFA to meet more than a relatively modest share of total running costs, New Zealand continues to believe that it is desirable, and indeed important, for those countries to take on a greater degree of financial ownership and control of their own organisation than they have now.

New Zealand Support

This does not mean that New Zealand is in any way withdrawing its support. New Zealand will continue to support the Forum Fisheries Agency, and to allocate a high priority to its needs in comparison with other competing demands on the resources available. We support the Agency not just because we see it as an effective means of promoting general development objectives. We support it because we are a South Pacific nation which shares in the common commitment of all FFA members to safeguard the resources and the future prosperity of our region.

ATTACHMENT I

Future Management Arrangements

We see it as particularly important to maintain our support for the FFA as it comes to grips with the opportunities and the challenges offered by the conclusion of the United Nations Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. In this context New Zealand is fully committed to securing outcomes that, as well as being consistent with the provisions of that agreement, will best meet the needs of the of the Agency's island country members and the objectives laid down by the South Pacific Forum. The FFC sub-committee on future management arrangements has made progress during the past year towards developing proposals for some of the issues involved. It has identified two quite specific lines of activity - firstly the nature of the internal arrangements to be established by the FFA and its members, and secondly the nature of the consultative framework that will be needed to conduct consultations and negotiations between member countries and fishing countries as provided for under the UN Agreement.

Unfortunately, in New Zealand's view, the focus of the sub-committee's work to date has been rather one-sided. It has tended to focus on the question of in-zone arrangements. While acknowledging the need to continue developing strong systems of in-zone management, New Zealand wishes to stress at this time the extreme urgency of the need to advance our consideration of the consultative framework. This issue is closely inter-related with the question of the FFA's internal arrangements, and we believe both need to be pursued in tandem. All FFA members are aware that FFC29 must decide how we are to pursue these issues in order to provide detailed and precise guidance to the Forum when it meets in Majuro. New Zealand is of the view that it would be very desirable to convene a consultation of experts to review the progress that has been achieved so far and focus on the key aspects that still need to be addressed. This would provide timely and valuable guidance for further work by the sub-committee on future management arrangements.

Multilateral Arrangements

During the past year a considerable amount of effort has been devoted by the FFA and its member countries to work on multilateral arrangements. Although this has been difficult and at times frustrating, some progress has been made. New Zealand is still of the opinion that further work on multilateral agreements would not be inconsistent with the strengthening of domestic fishing industries. Nevertheless we must accept that the interaction between these two approaches is complex, and we understand the reasoning of those member countries that believe the phasing down of work on multilateral agreements might lead to better progress with domestic industry development. New Zealand would suggest, however, that while phasing down or re-prioritising work on multilateral access arrangements for the time being may make sense, it would be undesirable for a number of reasons to close off completely the possibility of further discussions on the matter, particularly with the Republic of Korea.

ATTACHMENT I

At the same time, however, New Zealand believes that efforts to reach a sub-regional multilateral access arrangement with Taiwanese longline companies - the proposed "Polymelon" arrangement - should continue to be given high priority. Although for practical reasons Tokelau has been able to play only a relatively limited part in the development of this arrangement, it attaches considerable importance to it and hopes for an early successful outcome.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, we should like to express our appreciation to the FFA for the assistance extended to Tokelau in the form of a short-term FFA fellowship for a young Tokelauan lawyer, Manon Fala. Both the training and research she undertook during her attachment and the knowledge she has gained of the Agency and its methods of work will be very useful to her, and to Tokelau, in the future.

NIUE COUNTRY STATEMENT**Thank you Mr.Chairman.**

I must congratulate you for being elected to the post of Chairman for the coming year. Niue will endeavour to give you full support. I also would like to acknowledge the outgoing Chairman from PNG, and I must say you have done an excellent job. Thank you and well done.

To the Director of FFA, and especially your newly appointed Deputy Director Ian Cartwright and the whole Secretariat, the Niue Government would simply like to acknowledge the agency for their tremendous and excellent work for the year 1995 - 1996. I assure you that my Government will continue to work closely with your agency in trying to achieve for the coming years. Lastly Mr. Chairman, I would like to join with my fellow participants in congratulating and acknowledging the warmth welcome and hospitality accorded to us since we arrived in the Kingdom.

I would like to wish all participants in this Forum all the best in this weeks deliberation and that everyone should leave this paradise at the end of the week satisfied and look forward for another fruitful year.

Once again **THANK YOU** Mr. Chairman.

**FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING**

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 -17 May 1996

PALAU COUNTRY STATEMENT

I have but a brief statement to make.

Mr Chairman, the Palau delegation joins the ranks in congratulating you on your assumption to FFC Chairmanship. We look forward to a successful year under your leadership. In particular, we are confident you will guide FFA member states towards achieving their United Nations obligation to co-operate with distant water fishing nations and other coastal states with interest in our region, to ensure sustainability of tuna resources in our Pacific region, not only for our mutual benefits but especially for our future generations to come.

We would also wish to thank the outgoing Chair, Papua New Guinea, for ably guiding the deliberations of three FFC meetings and overseeing the programmes and activities of the FFA secretariat in the past year.

As this is my first attendance at a regular session of FFC, Mr Chairman, I will take a back seat role to observe and learn from those around the table more experienced and more knowledgeable about the complex issues in the agenda before us.

But before I close these brief remarks, Mr Chairman, please allow me this opportunity to convey my country's thanks and appreciation to the Government of Australia for availing to Palau next month a brand new patrol boat that will greatly enhance our maritime surveillance and marine law enforcement capabilities.

Finally Mr Chairman, please accept also my delegation's gratitude for the warm island hospitality extended to us not only here in Vava'u but during our stay last week in your capital of Nuku'alofa. Thank you.

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 - 17 May 1996

COUNTRY STATEMENT - SOLOMON ISLANDS

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Director and staff of FFA,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on taking up the chairmanship for the Forum Fisheries Committee. We pledge our support and will undertake our best efforts with you and the Secretariat.

Secondly, we would like to thank the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga for the welcome and hospitality accorded to my delegation and for the excellent arrangements for the meeting and the 15th PNA meeting in Nuku'alofa last week.

To the outgoing Chairman, the Government of Papua New Guinea, we would like to express our appreciation for guiding the work of the Committee under some difficult times during the past twelve months.

Now Mr Chairman, I would like to cover other issues, some of which are covered in the agenda.

FFA Convention - Executive Appointment

Rule 32 of Executive Appointments provides for consensus to be reached. If consensus is not achieved, procedures laid down under Article IV (2) of the FFA Convention must be complied with. Article IV (2) of the Convention provides for two thirds majority of votes by members present for any executive appointment before the Committee. The recent appointment of the new Deputy Director at FFC28 in Nadi in February caused some confusion. We, therefore, propose that this provision be amended to cater for future appointments. Our proposal is that the phrase "two thirds majority" in Article IV (2) of the Convention be replaced with the phrase "simple majority".

Legal Service Award for Support Staff.

It has come to our attention that long service award, equivalent to four weeks salary, for local staff would be applicable for staff who have served ten years with the Agency and will be effective from 1 June 1995. The provisions of the award as they currently stand could not possibly benefit any local staff employed before June 1995. We would like to request for clarification from FFA management as to whether the effectiveness of the awards relate to date of the decisions itself, or the period of service.

Review of FFA Membership Policy

It is our view that FFA membership be restricted to members of the South Pacific Forum as the Agency is an arm of SPF. With reference to territories in the region, it must be demonstrated that they are self-governing or in the process of being so. In this regard the territories will have to

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demonstrate that they are capable of discharging the obligations contained in the FFA Convention and other legally binding agreements.

Debit Tax and Foreign Exchange Transaction Levy

The Solomon Islands Government is working on the amendments to the Debit Tax which was passed in 1995. The exemptions in the amended act will apply to diplomatic missions as well as international and regional organisations.

On the Foreign Exchange Transaction Levy, the High Court of Solomon Islands ruled that the levy was improper and the ministerial order did not have legal status. Therefore, the levy has been revoked.

Future Management Arrangements

Solomon Islands noted the work of the sub-committee. As the Chairman of the sub-committee urged during its fourth meeting in April, member countries should now be seriously considering an effective management mechanism for the conservation and sustainable development of the region's tuna stocks in accordance with UNCLOS and the UN Implementing Agreement.

Member Country Contributions

Mr. Chairman, the work of the FFC Sub-committee on Member Country Contributions shows that the member countries would have to be more responsible for financing the work of the Secretariat. We support that the revised formula for the determination of member country contributions be based on the principles of benefits and the capacity to pay with the associated parameters to be used.

In addition it is our view that the service fees be charged to the US Treaty on Fisheries, FSM Arrangement for Regional Fisheries Access and other future access arrangements serviced by the Agency. FFC26 in Port Morsby did not make any decisions on the recommendation of the Sub-committee in relation to this issue. The Sub-committee has referred this back to FFC and we have to make a decision on this matter.

Solomon Islands is aware of its financial obligations to FFA and will ensure to expedite the necessary payments in the usual manner.

Mr Chairman, this statement covers our position on certain issues before the Committee. We shall make further comments on the other agenda items as they arise.

We wish the meeting every success in its deliberations.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 - 17 May 1996

VANUATU COUNTRY STATEMENT

MR CHAIRMAN,

ALLOW ME TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR APPOINTMENT TO THE CHAIR OF THIS VERY IMPORTANT MEETING OF THE FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE.

I WISH TO EXPRESS MY DELEGATIONS APPRECIATION TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA FOR THE EXCELLENT ARRANGEMENT OF THIS MEETING AND FOR THE WARM WELCOME AND KIND HOSPITALITY WHICH HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO MY DELEGATION.

MAY I REGISTER OUR APPRECIATION AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE WORK OF THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN OF FFC FOR THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS. I WISH TO CONGRATULATE MR. IAN CARTWRIGHT FOR HIS APPOINTMENT AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE AGENCY. VANUATU PLACES ITS SUPPORT FOR THE EXECUTIVE POST WITHIN FFA AND LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUE WITH THE GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM IN THE FUTURE. ON THE SAME NOTE, I WISH TO THANK MR. CAMILLUS NAROKOBI FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE DURING HIS TERM IN OFFICE AS THE ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF FFA, IN ENSURING THAT THE WORK OF THE AGENCY GOES ON SMOOTHLY WHILE AWAITING THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR.

MR CHAIRMAN, THE FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE REGIONS TUNA RESOURCES. VANUATU SUPPORTED THE FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY IN ITS PAST PERFORMANCE AND PAST ENDEAVOURS, IN PARTICULAR THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS AND THE FAO CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHING.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE AGENCY HAS A CONTINUING ROLE TO PLAY BY WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE DEVELOPING NATIONS OF THE REGION IN AN EFFORT TO RESOLVE MANY OF THE CHALLENGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE REGION.

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THE MAINTAINING OF A HIGH LEVEL ASSISTANCE FROM THE AGENCY, THE WIDE SCOPE OF ITS COVERAGE AND THE FLEXIBLE NATURE OF ITS

DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION, ALL REFLECT THE GENUINE COMMITMENT THE AGENCY AND ITS INDIVIDUAL EXPERTS, HAVE ALWAYS SHOWN TOWARDS SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR VANUATU.

THE PROVISION OF EXPERTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS TO WORK WITH AND ASSIST THE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN OF GREAT VALUE TO VANUATU. THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE AGENCY IN THIS AREA INCLUDE; THE REVIEW OF THE VANUATU FISHERIES LEGISLATION, ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF TUNA RESOURCES AND THE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND DATA ANALYSIS.

UNDER THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SECTOR, VANUATU HAS BEEN AND STILL BENEFITS A GREAT DEAL FROM THE AGENCY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME PROVIDED TO SEVERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS. ESPECIALLY IN THE COORDINATION OF FISHERIES STAFF TRAINING IN COMPUTING. VANUATU HOPES THAT SUCH ASSISTANCE WILL CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE.

VANUATU ACKNOWLEDGES THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS IN ESTABLISHING A TUNA MANAGEMENT BODY WHICH WOULD COMPRISE OF DWFNS AND COASTAL STATES FOR EFFECTIVE TUNA RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE REGION.

THE WORK OF THE AGENCY IN THE INITIATIVE OF VMS IS APPRECIATED BY VANUATU. WE BELIEVE THAT EFFECTIVE SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING ARE ESSENTIAL FOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT.

FINALLY MR. CHAIRMAN, I WISH TO THANK THE DIRECTOR AND THE STAFF OF THE AGENCY FOR THE EXCELLENT WORK IN PREPARING THE PAPERS AND ALSO THE ARRANGEMENT OF THIS MEETING.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO A FRUITFUL CONCLUSION AND THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THIS MEETING.

THANK YOU MR CHAIRMAN.

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
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TONGA COUNTRY STATEMENT

The management and development of fisheries in the Kingdom of Tonga has reached a stage where it needs to **change gear** and move at a faster pace. It needs to do this in order to meet the nation's economic, social and nutritional requirements; keep pace with developments within the region; and to cope with international forces which dictate the pace of economic development world-wide. In order to do this, the Government undertook the following tasks:

- established a separate Ministry of Fisheries in 1991 to guide the management and development of the nation's fisheries resources in a sustainable way;
- adopted a policy which prohibits foreign-based fishing vessels from having access to the tuna resources in the national waters. (Exception is given to vessels registered under regional treaties);
- acceded to the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS) and the United Nations Agreement on the Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks on 2 August and 4 December 1995 respectively;
- a rationalization exercise to review the aims, roles and functions of the Ministry in keeping with the Government's recent policy;
- re-structured the Ministry of Fisheries and re-defined its functions, goals and objectives for the period 1996-2000;
- developed a human resource development plan for the Ministry of Fisheries; and
- recruited a senior civil servant, in February 1996, to head the Ministry of Fisheries.

Whilst world-wide concern is focused on the sustainable development of fisheries resources, Tonga has also given prominence to promoting the good health of the Nation through more consumption of fish and healthy seafood. The concept is well supported at the political level where His Majesty, king Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, leads in the development of a national diet programme, whilst a national Nutritional Committee promotes the issues which support healthy eating. Recent reports on diet and health have indicated a rising trend of unhealthy populace due to an excessive consumption of fatty mutton.

One of the major objectives of the Ministry of Fisheries is to increase the availability of fish and other seafood to meet the nutritional needs of the populace as well as to develop the economic potential of the Nation. Strategies adopted include the enhancement of natural stocks in inshore waters with hatchery-produced shellfish such as giant clams, trochus and giant green snails as well as Vava'u Pearl Oyster etc., and the greater participation of coastal communities and fishermen/women in the management and conservation of inshore fisheries resources. A number of these strategies are geared to protect and involve women to a greater extent, to strengthen their capacity to earn as well as their ability to provide a healthy diet for their families.

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Tonga supports the FFA's long-term aim which is **“the development of the capacity of member countries to harvest the tuna resources within and outside their EEZs, while foreign fishing remains an interim measure”**. Tonga believes that FFA and member countries should continue to treat this as the priority goal.

The present revenue accruing to FFA member countries from the exploitation of tuna by distant water fishing nations is increasing, but far from adequate to reflect the true value of the resource to Pacific Islanders. It is therefore critical that the meagre resource affected by member countries are used wisely and directed towards the achievement of the above goal.

Plans are being drawn up to boost the development of the tuna longline fleet in Tonga. It is the wish of the Government that FFA would play a key role in the formulation and implementation of this project.

Tonga supports fully the efforts made by the FFC Sub-committee and FFA to develop the proposed regional fisheries organization or arrangement envisaged under UNCLOS and the Implementing Agreement. The Government hopes that FFC29 will make positive efforts to advance the work of the Sub-committee on this very important matter.

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

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13 - 17 May 1996

AMERICAN SAMOA STATEMENT

MR. CHAIRMAN, HONOURABLE AKAU'OLA HONOURABLE HEADS OF DELEGATIONS, DIRECTOR OF FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY, OBSERVERS AND GUESTS.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN HONOUR AND PLEASURE TO ATTEND REGIONAL MEETINGS SUCH AS THIS AND TO BE AMONGST FELLOW PACIFIC ISLANDERS. I THANK THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN AND YOURSELF, MR CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE FOR EXTENDING THE INVITATION TO AMERICAN SAMOA TO ATTEND THIS TWENTY-NINTH (29TH) FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE MEETING HERE IN VAVA'U, KINGDOM OF TONGA.

I TAKE THIS MOMENT, MR. CHAIRMAN TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE UNSELFISH AND COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE OF THE DIRECTOR OF FFA AND HIS STAFF FOR ALLOWING AMERICAN SAMOA TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS TRAINING PROGRAMS. SPECIFICALLY LAST YEAR, WHEN INVITATIONS WERE EXTENDED TO OUR STAFF MEMEBERS TO ATTEND THE DATABASE STANDARDS WORKSHOP IN APIA, WESTERN SAMOA AND THE ADVANCE DATA MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP IN HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS. ON BEHALF OF MY GOVERNMENT, WE THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

IN CONCLUSION, MR CHAIRMAN, I WISH TO EXTEND TO YOU AND THIS COMMITTEE THE BEST IN YOUR DELIBERATIONS DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS. AND TO THE GOVERNER AND PEOPLE OF VAVA'U, MALO AUPITO, FA'AFETAI TELE FOR THE WARM HOSPITALITY SHOWN THUS FAR.

SOIFUA.

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE

TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 - 17 May 1996

**ORGANIZATION STATEMENT,
THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL,
MR. EDWIN A. EBISUI, JR.**

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES AND ALL PARTICIPANTS TO THE 29TH FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE MEETING HERE IN BEAUTIFUL VAVA'U, THE KINGDOM OF TONGA. IT IS A GREAT HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO REPRESENT THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (WPRFMC) AND ALSO MY ISLAND STATE OF HAWAII AT THIS MEETING. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY FOR INVITING US TO OBSERVE AND PARTICIPATE IN THIS IMPORTANT GATHERING.

I CURRENTLY SERVE AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL; AND WITHIN THE COUNCIL SYSTEM, I AM CHAIRMAN OF THE BOTTOMFISH & SEAMOUNT GROUND FISH STANDING COMMITTEE AND ALSO SERVE AS A MEMBER OF THE VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM COMMITTEE (VMS). IN REGARD TO HAWAIIAN FISHERIES, I AM A FISHING VESSEL OWNER AND AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE SIZEABLE SMALL BOAT FISHERY OF HAWAII THAT IS A COMPLEX AND EVER SHIFTING MIXTURE OF COMMERCIAL, SUBSISTENCE AND RECREATIONAL INTERESTS. I CONCENTRATE MY OWN FISHING ACTIVITIES ON BOTTOMFISHING FOR DEEPWATER SNAPPERS AND TROLLING FOR PELAGIC SPECIES.

THE WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL IS 1 OF 8 U.S REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCILS ESTABLISHED BY FEDERAL LEGISLATION IN 1976 TO MANAGE U.S. DOMESTIC FISHERIES. OUR COUNCIL IS THE CENTRAL POLICY-FORMING ORGANIZATION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES WITHIN THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONES (EEZ) SURROUNDING AMERICAN SAMOA, GUAM,, HAWAII, THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS AND OTHER U.S. PACIFIC INSULAR AREAS (HOWLAND AND BAKER, JARVIS, JOHNSTON, PALMYRA AND WAKE ISLANDS). OUR REGION ENCOMPASSES AN AREA LARGER THAN ALL OTHER U.S. EEZ WATERS COMBINED AND OVERLAPS WITH LARGE AREAS SERVED BY THE FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY (FFA) AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION (SPC).

MANY OF THE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL FALL WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC TUNA TREATY, OFTEN HAILED AS AN EXCELLENT

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EXAMPLE OF A MULTI-LATERAL FISHERIES AGREEMENT WHICH IS EFFICIENTLY ADMINISTERED BY THE FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY. HOWEVER, THIS TREATY WAS SPECIFICALLY ESTABLISHED TO ADDRESS DISTANT-WATER ACCESS OF TUNA PURSE SEINE VESSELS, WHILE THE COLLECTION AND MONITORING OF CATCH AND EFFORT DATA FROM OTHER U.S FISHERIES HAS NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED. THE MAJOR FISHERY RESOURCES OF CONCERN TO THE WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL ARE HIGHLY MIGRATORY PELAGIC SPECIES THAT RECOGNIZE NO POLITICAL BOUNDARIES. THE WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL FEELS THAT IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR ALL COUNTRIES TO STRIVE TOWARD THE COLLECTION AND SHARING OF ALL FISHERIES CATCH AND EFFORT DATA AND WE ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN FULFILLING THIS GOAL FOR ALL PACIFIC BASED U.S DOMESTIC FLEETS.

SPEAKING AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF HAWAII, I FEEL THAT MANY OF OUR EXPERIENCES WITH RAPIDLY DEVELOPING FISHERIES AND THE EQUALLY RAPID RESPONSES OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO YOU ALL. UNTIL THE RECENT PAST, WE HAD A SIZEABLE POLE-AND-LINE FISHERY FOR SKIPJACK SUPPLYING A DOMESTIC CANNERY IN HONLULU AND A SMALL DOMESTIC LONGLINE FISHERY FOR YELLOWFIN AND BIGEYE TUNAS. AN ARTISANAL HANDLINE FISHERY FOR LARGE YELLOWFIN OPERATED EVERY SUMMER OFF THE BIG ISLAND, AS IT STILL DOES TODAY, AND WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD A ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY IMPORTANT SMALL BOAT TROLL AND SPORT CHARTER FISHERY FOR TUNAS, MAHIMAHI, WAHOO, STRIPPED AND BLUE MARLIN. IN ADDITION, THE NEED TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE INDIGENOUS FISHING RIGHTS, WHILE BALANCING THE DEMANDS ON MARINE RESOURCES BY A HIGHLY DIVERSE ETHNIC COMMUNITY, HAS ALWAYS MADE OUR SITUATION VERY INTERESTING AND COMPLEX.

THE U.S FISHERY COUNCIL PROCESS UTILIZES FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS (FMPS) WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES WHILE ALLOWING VIABLE AND EQUITABLE EXPLOITATION BY COMMERCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND TRADITIONAL USER GROUPS. THESE MANAGEMENT PLANS UTILIZE THE BEST AVAILABLE BIOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIROMENTAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INFORMATION TO FEED INTO THE COUNCIL PROCESS THROUGH A VARIETY OF COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY PANELS. TO DATE, THE WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL IS THE ONLY PACIFIC MANAGEMENT COUNCIL WITH A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PELAGIC RESOURCES (ESTABLISHED IN 1987). THE FMP PROCESS TAKES A PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH TO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (AS ADVOCATED BY THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES) THE FMP APPROACH IS BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF MAINTAINING FISHERIES AT "OPTIMAL YIELD" THAT CONSIDERS LOCAL EXPLOITATION RATES, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONCERNS AS WELL AS RECRUITMENT OVERFISHING ON THE STOCK-WIDE BASIS. THE KEY POINT IS THAT THE

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COUNCIL PROCESS IS NOT RIDGIDLY BOUND TO ADOPTING MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS ONLY WHEN ALL THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE IS COMPLETE. THIS ALLOWS THE COUNCIL TO ANTICIPATE AND MANAGE PROACTIVELY.

THE HAWAII DOMESTIC PELAGIC FISHERY CHANGED DRAMATICALLY WHEN THE TUNA CANNERY CLOSED, AND LATER WHEN THE DEMAND AND PRICE FOR SASHIMI GRADE TUNA ROSE SHARPLY. IN THE EARLY 1980S U.S. VESSELS FROM DECLINING FISHERIES IN THE ATLANTIC OR OTHER REGIONS OF THE U.S. SHIFTED OPERATIONS TO HAWAII. THEY QUICKLY DISCOVERED THAT HAWAII'S UNIQUE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NORTH CENTRAL PACIFIC MADE FOR AN IDEAL HOME PORT FOR PELAGIC LONGLINE OPERATIONS. THE FLEET COULD OPERATE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR WORKING NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS TO EXPLOIT NORTH PACIFIC SWORDFISH STOCKS. ALMOST OVERNIGHT, THE HAWAII DOMESTIC LONGLINE FLEET TRIPLED IN SIZE WITH LARGE MODERN VESSELS ARRIVING DURING THE LATE 1980S. HONOLULU QUICKLY BECAME THE LEADING SWORDFISH LANDING PORT IN THE UNITED STATES. BOTTOMFISH AND LOBSTER ALSO EXPERIENCED DANGEROUSLY RAPID GROWTH. LOCAL FISHERMAN FELT ECONOMICALLY THREATENED BY THE LARGE NEW VESSELS, INDIGENOUS FISHING RIGHTS WERE THREATENED AND GEAR INTERACTIONS WITH COASTAL TROLLERS AND HANDLINE FISHERMAN INCREASED. THE PARALLELS TO SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRIES THAT HAVE SEEN THE RAPID EXPANSION OF PURSE SEINING AND LOCALLY BASED SASHIMI LONGLINE OPERATIONS ARE APPARENT.

THE WESTERN PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL RESPONDED TO THIS RAPIDLY EVOLVING SITUATION IN A NUMBER OF WAYS RESULTING IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT AMENDMENTS TO THE 1987 PELAGICS FMP, INCLUDING LIMITED ENTRY TO THE FISHERY AND AREA CLOSURES FOR LONGLINE VESSELS TO MITIGATE GEAR INTERACTIONS WITH SMALL VESSELS AND PROTECTED SPECIES (PRIMARILY SEA TURTLES AND MARINE MAMMALS). PROVISIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE TO FACILITATE ENTRY TO THE FISHERY BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES. IN SEPTEMBER 1993, THE WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL REQUESTED THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) ESTABLISH A MANDATORY AT-SEA OBSERVER PROGRAM WHICH IS NOW FULLY OPERATIONAL, AND WHICH SUPPLIES IMPORTANT DATA ON PROTECTED SPECIES INTERACTIONS, LOGBOOK VERIFICATION OF CATCH AND EFFORT AND RELIABLE INFORMATION ON BYCATCH AND DISCARD LEVELS. THE COUNCIL HAS ALSO ACTED TO REQUIRE ALL LONGLINE VESSELS TOO CARRY AUTOMATED VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS (VMS). THE COUNCIL HAS ALSO SUPPORTED EFFORTS TO MAXIMIZE UTILIZATION OF LONGLINE BYCATCH SPECIES BY PROMOTING LOCAL NICHE MARKETS AND SPECIALTY SEAFOOD PRODUCTS. HAWAII HAS HAD AN ADVANTAGE IN THIS REGARD DUE TO OUR LARGE ETHNIC DIVERSITY COMPOSED HEAVILY OF ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS.

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ANOTHER IMPORTANT ASPECT OF HAWAII PELAGIC FISHERIES OF RELEVANCE TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC HAS TO DO WITH THE EXPLOITATION OF HIGH SEAS ZONES. THE MAJORITY OF HAWAII BASED SWORDFISH LANDINGS ARE MADE NORTH OF OUR EEZ, AND SIGNIFICANT PROPORTIONS OF OUR PELAGIC FISHERIES FOR BIGEYE, YELLOWFIN AND ALBACORE TUNA COME FROM INTERNATIONAL WATERS OF THE NORTH PACIFIC. NON-REPORTING OR UNDER-REPORTING OF CATCHES BY OTHERS ON THE HIGH SEAS IS A SIGNIFICANT DRAWBACK TO REGIONAL DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS AND HINDERS EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES. IN NOVEMBER 1995, PRESIDENT CLINTON SIGNED INTO U.S LAW OF THE HIGH SEAS FISHING COMPLIANCE ACT OF 1995 WHICH ESTABLISHED THE UNITED STATES AS ONE OF THE FIRST DISTANT WATER FISHING NATIONS TO ACT POSTIVELY TO SUPPORT THE AGREEMENT TO PROMOTE COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES BY FISHING VESSELS ON THE HIGH SEAS, ADOPTED BY THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO) OF THE UNITED NATIONS. HIGH SEAS FISHING PERMITS ARE NOW REQUIRED OF ANY U.S. DOMESTIC VESSEL ANTICIPATING FISHING OPERATIONS ON THE HIGH SEAS, AND, CATCH AND EFFORT COLLECTION LOGBOOKS ARE CURRENTLY BEING DESIGNED.

THE FACT REMAINS, HOWEVER, THAT WE REPRESENT ONLY A FRACTION OF THE CATCH AND EFFORT ON PELAGICS IN THE NORTH PACIFIC. WE FEEL THAT OUR MOVE TO IMPLEMENT HIGH SEAS REPORTING BY OUR OWN FLEETS IS A SHOW OF GOOD FAITH TOWARD THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES. RECENTLY, THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT INVITED OUR COUNCIL TO JOIN A HIGH LEVEL U.S. DELEGATION TO THE FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERIM SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE FOR TUNAS AND TUNA-LIKE SPECIES OF THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN (ICS). DATA COLLECTION AND SHARING WAS A MAJOR AGENDA ITEM TO THIS HISTORIC MEETING. UNTIL THE FORMATION OF THIS GROUP, THE ONLY SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES DEDICATED TO RESOLVING PELAGIC DATA NEEDS IN THE PACIFIC WERE THE SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE RESEARCH GROUP (SPAR) AND THE WESTERN PACIFIC YELLOWFIN RESEARCH GROUP (WPYRG) WITH REPRESENTATION FROM THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM STATES AND TERRITORIES, THE U.S., AUSTRALIA, INDONESIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND ALL ASIAN DISTANT WATER FISHING NATIONS (DWFNS). THE WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL STRONGLY SUPPORTS THIS TREND TO BRING ALL DWFNS TOGETHER WITH THE OWNERS OF THE RESOURCES TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES AND TO WORK TOGETHER TOWARD THE UTMATE GOAL OF LONG TERM SUSTAINABILTY AND INCREASED ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO LOCAL ECONOMIES.

FINALLY, THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE AND OFFER CONTINUED SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC AND THE FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY IN YOUR QUEST TOWARD THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND

MANAGEMENT OF SOUTH PACIFIC FISHERY RESOURCES. YOUR LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE FORMATION OF MULTI-LATERAL ACCESS AGREEMENTS,

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DOMESTIC INCENTIVES IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY, VMS, SURVEILLANCE AND CONCERN FOR BYCATCH AND INTERACTION ISSUES STAND AS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE FOR ALL GLOBAL FISHERIES.

I THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN FOR THIS OPPERTUNITY AND I LOOK FORWARD TO LISTENING AND LEARNING AND MEETING YOU ALL DURING THE COMING WEEK. MAHALO, SI YU'US MA'ASE AND FA'AFETAI TELE LAVA.

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 - 17 May 1996

STATEMENT TO FFC29 BY ICLARM

ICLARM welcomes the opportunity to present a summary of our recent research on ways to increase the productivity of inshore marine resources associated with coral reefs to FFC29. The research was carried out at the Coastal Aquaculture Centre (CAC) in Solomon Islands and involved development of village farming methods for giant clams, assessing the availability of blacklip pearl oyster spat in the wild, development of mass-rearing techniques for tropical sea cucumbers and studying the use of marine protected areas to manage exploited tropical invertebrates.

Giant Clam Farming Systems

In 1995, the CAC maintained a vigorous program on the development of village-based farming systems for giant clams. Major areas of progress involved accumulation of new broodstock, increased production of "seed clams" for village farms, improved methods of nutrition during the land-based nursery phase, completion of large-scale grow-out experiments on one species and initiation of such experiments for another three species, expansion of the number of village farming trials and a five-fold increase in the sale of giant clams to the aquarium trade by village farmers in Solomon Islands. Further details of these achievements are set out below.

Broodstock: The accumulation and selection of giant clam broodstock is an ongoing activity at the CAC. The priorities in 1995 were to acquire additional individuals of the two largest species (*Tridacna gigas* and *T. derasa*), and to collect brightly coloured specimens of the smaller species (*T. maxima* and *T. crocea*).

The program of accumulating F1 broodstock from cohorts produced at the CAC also continued in 1995. Under this program, 100 of the fastest growing and most brightly coloured individuals are kept either at the CAC or the field station at Nusa Tupe. However, these are not ideal areas for on-growing, so alternative sites will be sought in 1996. The

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collection of F1 broodstock was also augmented with 21 *T. gigas* (40-46 cm) purchased from farms that received the first cohorts of this species produced by the CAC in 1988.

Production of seed clams: Eight cohorts of “seed” giant clams were harvested from the land-based nursery at the CAC in 1995. From these cohorts, 43,396 *T. maxima*, 30,800 *T. crocea* and 43,753 *T. derasa* were distributed to village farms. In addition 17,877 *T. gigas* and 5,600 *Hippopus hippopus* were distributed from Paruru Aquaculture Farm. This farm is a locally owned facility that receives two-week-old larvae from the CAC, grows them out in a land-based system and sells them to village farmers. Three cohorts of giant clams (796,000 14-day-old *T. gigas*, 400,000 13-day-old *T. derasa*, and 360,000 16-day-old *T. crocea*) were sent to the farm in 1995.

New methods for applying Ammonium Sulphate to fertilise the zooxanthellae of “seed” clams were introduced in 1995. These practices were based on a major experiment conducted at the CAC by Ms A Grice, a PhD student from James Cook University, Australia. Her research showed that the past practice of applying a 20 µM concentration each day inhibited the growth of *T. maxima* smaller than 10 mm shell length (SL), but that growth of clams of 15-20 mm SL could be improved significantly when given a 50 µM solution of the fertilizer. Application of these results has reduced the time it takes to raise giant clams in the land-based nursery and should result in lower production costs (price of seed clams) for village farmers.

Village-Based Farming of Giant Clams: In 1995, the CAC embarked on a project to increase the number of small-scale farming trials for giant clams at coastal villages in Solomon Islands. This project was funded by the European Union's STABEX program. The objectives of the expansion project were:

1. To scale-up the production of cultured giant clams at existing village farms, and to establish several new farms.
2. To demonstrate that village giant clam farmers can grow giant clams at a profit, and that farmers can make a substantial proportion of their income from this activity.
3. To generate increased demand for “seed” giant clams by farmers and thereby provide the incentive for investment in a commercial hatchery for giant clams.
4. To find additional overseas markets for giant clams produced by village farmers.

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During 1995, the number of giant clam farmers increased from 16 to 26. All new farmers were supplied with sufficient materials to construct 16 grow-out cages for giant clams. They were also supplied with the implements necessary for farming. All the existing farmers, and some of the new ones, made sales to the aquarium market in 1995 (see below). The more established farmers now receive a major proportion of their income from these sales.

Village Grow-out Trials and Related Experiments: The large number of village clam farmers spread over much of Solomon Islands, and the commercial scale of their activities, has provided the CAC with the opportunity to plan large-scale grow-out experiments to obtain robust estimates of variability in the growth and survival of giant clams across a broad range of sites. Each of the six species of giant clams are being put through such experiments with the active participation of the farmers. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) has provided funds for a Senior Research Associate to analyse the growth and survival data and publish it in the primary scientific literature. The data will form a strong basis for evaluating the commercial viability of farming each species.

In 1995, large-scale experiments on *T. squamosa* were completed at 10 sites. Survival ranged from 42% to 83%, and growth from 2.3 to 8.6 mm month⁻¹. Results for an experiment on *T. derasa* were superior: growth varied between 4.6 and 10.3 mm month⁻¹, and mean survival was 90%. For both *T. squamosa* and *T. derasa*, growth was positively correlated with water flow and negatively correlated with water clarity.

Large-scale grow-out experiments on *T. crocea* and *T. maxima* were also initiated in 1995. After five months, *T. crocea* had an average growth of 1.3 mm month⁻¹, and variable survival, ranging from 20% - 90%. Low survival occurred at several sites because the juveniles crawled out of the cages. Evidently the substratum in the cage was not suitable. We are currently testing alternative substrates in an effort to enhance growth and survival of this species. Average survival for *T. maxima* after two months was 78%. To date, all five species of giant clams appear to be highly suitable for village farming.

Restocking: The giant clam project at the CAC also has a strong emphasis on restocking. At the conclusion of the grow-out period for sale to the aquarium trade, each farmer sets aside 20 individuals from each cohort for grow-out and subsequent "release" onto reefs.

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The growth and survival of the clams used for restocking is monitored during three phases: monthly during the initial 8-12 months, quarterly for the next two years, and then quarterly after they are removed from the protective cages and placed on coral reefs. Twenty farmers are involved in the program. To date, 2,600 individuals from six cohorts have been set aside by the farmers for restocking. The initial "release" of clams onto reefs will occur in mid 1996.

Marketing: In 1995, the CAC co-ordinated the sale of giant clams to the aquarium market on behalf of village farmers. The vast majority of sales were to the US. Sales totalled 27,000 clams with a gross value of US\$77,000. Sales are expected to increase again substantially in 1996 with the opening of the European market.

In 1996, a submission will be made for funds to employ a seafood marketing expert to investigate the potential of giant clams for the sashimi trade in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea and Japan. In addition, restaurants in Solomon Islands will be fitted with tanks for holding live giant clams produced by village farmers. Potential markets for cultured giant clams in Guam will also be investigated.

Pearl Oyster Farming

To determine if there were sufficient spat of *P. margaritifera* within Solomon Islands to establish farms, spat collectors were deployed at 24 sites spread across 500 km. The sampling program was also designed to quantify spatial and temporal variation in the availability of spat, to test various materials for the collection of spat and to assess the effectiveness of enclosing the collectors in protective mesh bags.

Although the average number of spat collected from most sites was low, commercial quantities were recorded at a number of areas in the Western Province of Solomon Islands. At the two best sites, mean rates of 3.0 and 4.6 spat per collector. Collection rates of > 6.0 spat per collector were obtained for the best of the collecting materials.

The project also identified distinct seasonality in the abundance of *P. margaritifera* spat, with the greatest collections being made between November and February. An unexpected result was that collectors inside protective bags did not produce more spat. Rather, abundances of spat were often lower on the collectors inside bags because predatory gastropods and crabs settling to the collectors from the plankton were trapped inside the

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bags and caused heavy mortality of spat. The bags also became fouled, restricting water flow.

Grow-out of spat: Spat of *P. margaritifera* taken from the collectors were grown-out in lantern nets. The nets consisted of round plastic trays surrounded and supported by a mesh sock. Growth rates were as rapid as elsewhere in the Pacific, with the oysters attaining 120 mm within 18 months of settlement on the collectors. However, there were problems with survival. These problems were due in part to the abundance of predators and the long periods between site inspections at remote villages.

Continuation: Due to the promising results from areas in the Western Province of Solomon Islands, and support from the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries to continue the research, ICLARM has received funding from ACIAR to continue the project for a further two years. The objectives of the extended research on blacklip pearl oysters are:

1. To work with local villagers to scale-up the collection of blacklip pearl oyster spat at the three sites with the greatest abundance of spat in 1994-1995.
2. To continue experimentation to identify the optimum system for collecting spat of the blacklip pearl oyster.
3. To develop methods for maximising the survival of oysters in the juvenile grow-out phase.
4. To assist villagers at three sites to establish small-scale pearl farms based on oysters derived from wild spat.
5. To produce the biological data needed to make a thorough economic analysis of potential returns to village farmers from farming black pearls in Solomon Islands.

Sea Cucumbers (*Beche-de-mer*)

In 1995, ICLARM completed pilot scale research on cultivation and fishery enhancement of tropical sea cucumbers funded by the Australia and Pacific Science Foundation. The research centred on evaluating the growth of one species, the surf redfish (*Actinopyga mauritiana*), in captivity, describing the reproductive cycle of the white teatfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*) as a prelude to inducing wild broodstock to spawn, and assessing whether the larvae of the lollyfish (*H. atra*) and *A. mauritiana* could be reared on formulated diets.

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Growth in captivity: The study on the growth of *A. mauritiana* was the first of its kind to demonstrate rapid growth in captivity. Juveniles (≈ 7 g) were kept for 12 months at three different stocking densities: low (26 g m^{-2}), medium (130 g m^{-2}), high (260 g m^{-2}). Mean growth was highest in the low density treatment ($10.4 \text{ g month}^{-1} \pm 8.33 \text{ SE}$), but ceased once total biomass reached $250\text{-}300 \text{ g m}^{-2}$. Growth at medium density was much reduced compared to that at low density, and was negligible at high density. The cessation of growth at low density, and reduced growth at the higher densities, was due to overgrazing of suitable algal food. These results suggest that *A. mauritiana* could be suitable for aquaculture in rudimentary intertidal pens if juveniles of ≈ 7 g are stocked initially at densities of four m^{-2} .

Reproductive cycles: Gonad development in *Holothuria fuscogilva* was investigated between February 1994 and December 1995 in Solomon Islands. Each month, reproductive condition of about 20 adult specimens was assessed by measuring changes in gonad index, tubule length and diameter, oocyte size and tubular branching. Male and female *H. fuscogilva* were found to develop synchronously. A larger percentage of individuals with mature gonads were found from July to December. However, gonad indices were highest in August, indicating that it may be easiest to induce this species to spawn at that time of year.

Spawning and Larval Rearing: *H. atra* and *A. mauritiana* were induced to spawn by raising the water temperature in broodstock tanks 3°C above ambient, and by transferring the animals repeatedly between tanks at the heated and ambient temperatures. Fertilization and early larval development was straightforward. However, larvae failed to develop past Day 30 when fed formulated diets. The CAC now believes reliable methods of rearing the larvae of tropical species of sea cucumbers using live algae must be developed before attempts are made to simplify the process with formulated diets.

In order to develop the methods for mass rearing of larvae necessary for enhancement of wild stocks, a grant proposal was submitted to ACIAR. A 5-year project was approved in March 1995. It has the following objectives:

- i) To develop reliable methods for inducing tropical species of sea cucumbers to spawn.
- ii) To identify tropical algae suitable for the nutrition of larval sea cucumbers.

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- iii) To develop repeatable, cost-effective methods for rearing the larvae and juveniles of tropical sea cucumbers to the stage where they are robust enough for release into coral reef habitats.

Work on the project in 1995 centred on building accommodation and offices needed for the project staff, constructing an algal culture facility and additional wet laboratories, and recruiting a project Scientist and Research Associate.

Use of a Marine Conservation Area to Manage Inshore Fisheries

ICLARM's other major project in 1995 involved monitoring the effects of a Marine Conservation Area (MCA) of 83 sq km at the Arnavon Islands, Solomon Islands. Together with the Solomon Islands Division of Fisheries, The Nature Conservancy, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and ACIAR, ICLARM is studying whether the proposed closure of the MCA for three years will result in an increase in abundances of Trochus, sea cucumbers, pearl oysters and giant clams. The MCA was declared in mid 1995. To date, the work has focused on developing appropriate survey methods and evaluating the abundance of animals in the MCA and at three control areas prior to the declaration. These abundances will be compared to those in the MCA and control areas at the end of the closure, with the expectation that the counts of animals will be higher in the MCA than in the areas that remain open to fishing. The results of this study will be a strong guide to the role that marine protected areas can play in the management of inshore fisheries throughout the region.

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

13 - 17 May 1996

**15TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE NAURU AGREEMENT
(PNA15)
REPORT OF THE PNA CHAIRMAN.**

Thank you Mr. Chairman. It gives me great pleasure to present to this meeting a summary of the outcome of the fifteenth annual meeting of PNA. For the first time the meeting was linked with the annual meeting of the Parties to the Palau Arrangement and the first annual meeting of the Parties to the Federated States of Micronesia following the coming into force of these instruments on 1 November 1995 and 23 September 1995 respectively.

In considering a report on the work of the FFC Sub-committee on Future Management Arrangements it was agreed that the PNA arrangements should for the time being remain as an independent, but compatible entity within the proposed new structure. To strengthen the position of FFA, however, it was essential that adequate in-zone arrangements be developed as well as a preferred negotiating position for multilateral discussions. It was also agreed that having regard for the need for management of highly migratory species to be applied across the entire range of the stock that overtures should be made to non FFA countries in a timely manner.

The meeting then also considered the Report of the Sub-committee on Member Country Contributions. Endorsement was given to the suggestion that services provided by the Agency staff in relation to the management of the US Treaty should be a legitimate charge to the Treaty. It was also agreed that there was a need for FFA to become less dependent on aid monies for its operation. The suggestion that the current accountability system be maintained and improved was accepted as was the proposal that further work should be carried out, possibly with the assistance of an external consultant to determine an equitable scale of member country contributions. There was also agreement that any revised country contributions should be based primarily on the benefits derived from the tuna resources and be weighted to take account of individual circumstances, but that this should be subject to the outcome of the proposed consultant's report. The meeting noted the proposal that increased contributions should be made by PNA countries but felt that this was a further issue that should be deferred for further consideration again following receipt of the consultant's report. It was felt that, in general the 'user pays' principle might have a possible adverse affect on regional cooperation, and that this was a matter that would merit further consideration following the consultancy. Finally, the meeting strongly endorsed a recommendation that, in connection with future management arrangements, member countries should collectively work towards increasing payments from vessel operators particularly DWFNs.

Attention was then given to the general question of management issues in the longline fishery. The meeting considered a proposal for a consultancy to consider in detail the issues associated with such a management framework. A small working group considered and the meeting agreed upon the terms of reference for the proposed consultancy. It is anticipated that a consultant will be instructed within the next few weeks.

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The current status of proposed multilateral access arrangements with both Korea and Taiwan was also considered. It was noted that clear reservations were now being expressed on the part of some of the countries as to whether or not such multilateral arrangement should be taken any further. The

meeting discussed other approaches to the question of multilateral arrangements, and the establishment of work on such arrangements, including the establishment of a moratorium, in the context of FFA work programme priorities for consideration by FFC29.

The importance was noted of the forthcoming 4th PNA/OFCF Symposium in Tokyo. The draft agenda for the symposium was considered and discussion took place as to the appropriate level of representation of FFA member countries.

The meeting received a report as to the outcome of a mini legal consultation held in Nadi in November 1995. The various proposals to amend the provisions of the rules of operation relating to the Regional Register and the Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions of access were considered. It was noted that the same report would come before FFC29 for consideration and decision as to any further action to be taken.

The first annual meeting of the parties to the Palau Arrangement reviewed the Arrangement in the context of proposed developments in fisheries management. The meeting endorsed the need to review and suggest amendments to the Palau Arrangement to make it compatible with other in-zone management arrangements, the Law of the Sea Convention and the UN Implementing Agreement. There was then discussion as regards the general question of vessel numbers and the overall principle that the number of licenses tone made available should be progressively transferred from bilateral agreements to domestic. It was considered that the DWFNs were well aware of the approaching deadline of 1997 with regard to an initial transfer of 10%. After further discussion it was agreed that the proposal for an additional cut should be deferred for the time being.

A proposal that a number of Japanese purse seine licenses should be converted to single seine licenses was also considered. After some discussion, it was agreed that the proposal would be dealt with by combining the totals of group and single seine vessels to achieve a total of 39. The 10% reduction to take effect in April 1997 would then reduce the fleet to 35.

The first annual meeting of the parties to the Federated States of Micronesia Arrangement considered a report of the administrator and also approved administrative cost budget for 1996 of US\$2,550.00. Consideration was also given to the need to review eligibility criteria and fees. It was acknowledged that discussion on this regard was handicapped by the fact that the Arrangement had only been in operation for a comparatively short period of time. It was agreed after further discussion that this was matter which could be addressed by a task force. Terms of Reference for such a task force was discussed and subsequently agreed by the meeting.

Thank you.