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**SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION**

**TWENTY-FOURTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES**  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 3-7 August 1992)

**REPORT**

**SPC/FFA COLLOQUIUM**  
Paper presented by Forum Fisheries Agency

FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE

Twenty Second Meeting,  
Alofi, Niue

4-7 May, 1992

FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY - SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

COLLOQUIUM

(Port Vila, Vanuatu, 14-16 March, 1992)

SUMMARY RECORD

INTRODUCTION

1. Representatives of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the South Pacific Commission's Fisheries Programme (SPCFP) met in Port Vila, Vanuatu to exchange information on their respective work programmes and to identify improved ways for meeting the fisheries needs of member countries. SPC was also required to report to CRGA/Conference on the current level of coordination and dialogue between the two organizations.
2. Mr Julian Dashwood, SPC Fisheries Coordinator was acclaimed Chairman.
3. The objectives and agenda are appended as Attachment A.

COASTAL FISHERIES ACTIVITIES

General review of work plans/future initiatives

4. SPC's Coastal Fisheries Programme Manager presented a summary of the Coastal Fisheries Work Programme and details of the budgetary breakdown. Major areas of activity are:-
  - a) the Deep Sea Fisheries Development Project (support to field fishing activities for resource assessment, development and training purposes);
  - b) the Fish Handling and Processing Project (post-harvest development, especially upgrading fresh fish handling practices and alternative product development) which incorporates the Women's Fisheries Development Project (focusing on support to the generation of post-harvest based income-earning activities for coastal women in Papua New Guinea);

- c) the Regional Fisheries Training Project (support to vocational training and coordination of training activities);
- d) the Inshore Fisheries Research Project (support to acquisition of information for national inshore marine resources management), and
- e) the Fisheries Information Project (information repackaging and dissemination).

5. FFA's Deputy Director reviewed current and planned programmes concerning fisheries development, research, economics and information services. He noted current staffing and financial difficulties, the agreement for the continuation of the Research Coordination Unit, marketing and project development advisory services.

#### Areas of mutual interest

6. Collaboration in some areas of the SPC/FFA coastal fisheries work programmes has already developed although this is informal and imperfect. In particular, a relatively high level of communication has occurred between the Research Coordination Unit (RCU) at FFA and the Inshore Fisheries Research Project (IFRP) at SPC, and between the Fish Handling and Processing Project (FHPP) and FFA's market advisory service. The meeting noted that this needed to be formalised and extended to other areas, notably fisheries development and training. As a result the meeting recommended that:

- (a) SPC's Coastal Fisheries Programme establish a procedure for the production of informal reports for restricted distribution (subject to country approval), immediately field work or research is completed.
- (b) In order to ensure that both organisations remain fully informed of changes in the fisheries sector at a national level, FFA/SPC member countries agree to the exchange of information and reports relating to country-specific activities between the two organisations as standard procedure.
- (c) In order to reduce the potential for duplication of activities, that on receipt of requests from member countries, FFA and SPC staff consult fully prior to initiating action.
- (d) Closer ties be encouraged and promoted between specialist work areas at the two organisations. This relates particularly to the work of fisheries development, but also training, research, processing, handling and marketing.
- (e) SPC to arrange for a comprehensive review of the Inshore Fisheries Research Project during 1992 which should specifically address the relationship of the IFRP to other regional organisations working in the field of fisheries research.
- (f) Recognising that FFA has commenced preparation of profiles for near-shore resources, member countries should be encouraged to utilise the established format and procedures for the project to be completed.

## OCEANIC FISHERIES ACTIVITIES

### General review of work plans and future initiatives

7. The TBAP Chief Fisheries Scientist outlined the objectives, activities and funding situation of the programme. Currently, work is undertaken in the compilation of fisheries catch, effort and size composition data, and in stock assessment orientated research on tropical tunas and albacore. Future initiatives, as encompassed in a Lome IV funding proposal, will continue this work and also include a new component for the provision of postgraduate training for Pacific Islanders in fisheries biology and assessment.

8. The FFA Deputy Director described the Agency's work in attempting to establish a workable mechanism for management of the western Pacific purse seine fishery, principally through a regional cap on vessel licences. This activity has been largely in response to the rapidly increasing catch of yellowfin (currently approaching 400,000 mt), and the unknown capacity of the stock to support such catches. Management objectives are being pursued through application of the MTC's, development of the Regional Register and ongoing discussions with various DWFNs regarding multilateral treaties.

### Areas of mutual interest

9. SPC/FFA cooperation on development and maintenance of the Regional Tuna Fisheries Database is well established. Regular exchanges of data occur, ensuring that both organisations have essentially the same data. Exchanges and collaborative development of software ensure that duplication of effort is avoided. It was noted that the database is used for different purposes by the two organisations, in line with the mandates given to them by member countries.

10. With regard to areas of mutual interest, the following matters for action were agreed:-

- (a) A review of the Regional Register of Foreign Fishing Vessels and logsheet database systems takes place to ensure compatibility between the systems.
- (b) The Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme (TBAP) regularly consult with FFA and member countries on developments in assessing the status of tuna stocks in the western Pacific region.
- (c) FFA routinely brief the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB) on economic issues associated with South Pacific tuna fisheries.
- (d) Biological data collection, including estimates of by-catch and discards, by US Multilateral Treaty observers, national observers and the proposed new SPC scientific observers should be examined with a view to standardising procedures. A meeting of relevant SPC, FFA and national (FSM) staff, possibly with input from experienced observers from within the region and/or the eastern Pacific, was recommended.
- (e) FFA and TBAP discuss with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

arrangements for port sampling activities at all locations where unloading/transshipment occurs.

- (f) Recognising that the South Pacific region supports the largest tuna fishery in the world at a current value on global markets in excess of US\$2 billion annually, FFA and SPC explore all options for increasing awareness about tuna fisheries in the South Pacific region to generate increased support for biological and economic research and management activities.
- (g) FFA more actively promote research on economic issues associated with tuna fishing operations and markets.

The concept of management of western Pacific tuna fisheries through a linked series of multilateral treaties was considered to have merit. It was noted that a mechanism to informally discuss resource management and conservation matters was likely to be established in the extension to the US Multilateral Treaty. Pacific Island Parties will discuss this in more detail at the next internal meeting.

#### Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB)

11. In examining the role of SCTB it was explained that SCTB had been established by SPC member countries to:

- (i) provide peer review of the work of the TBAP;
- (ii) assist with the acquisition of relevant scientific data; and
- (iii) arrange collaborative studies.

12. To this end, it was directed by member countries that the SCTB membership would comprise the TBAP CFS, the FFA Director (the only permanent members), representatives of PINs with strong interest in tuna fisheries, representatives of DWFNs and various invited experts. Under these guidelines, the SCTB has met annually since 1988, providing recommendations on the TBAP to RTMF and subsequently, to CRGA and the South Pacific Conference.

13. The 1991 SCTB meeting was attended by representatives of twelve PINs (including six of the eight PNA members), three metropolitan SPC members (Australia, New Zealand and US), two countries with large domestic tuna fisheries adjacent to the SPC region (Indonesia and Philippines) and Japan. Representatives of various regional organisations, including FFA, were also present. It was considered that SCTB provided a useful peer review process for the TBAP. Additionally it was effective in promoting wider access to scientific fisheries data, as evidenced by recent commitments by Japan in this respect, and in facilitating collaborative research, such as that to be undertaken by WPYRG. It was agreed that Pacific Island involvement in SCTB ensures that the interests of Pacific Island nations are not compromised and that more generally, cooperation between SPC and DWFNs at the scientific level is not disadvantageous to Pacific Island aspirations with respect to tuna fisheries management.

14. It was clarified that there are no plans to seek greater autonomy for the TBAP from the SPC structure, particularly in association with DWFNs. Previous external reviews of TBAP institutional arrangements have however considered various options at the direction of member

countries. It is recognized that there is only one existing model under consideration by SPC/FFA member countries for a tuna management regime in the region, that would utilize existing regional organizations as management (FFA) and scientific advisory (SPC) bodies, respectively.

## SPC/FFA LINKAGES

### Formal linkages

15. Attachment B summarizes the formal links between FFA and SPCFP, and lists work programme areas where significant cooperation occurs. These had been discussed in earlier sessions of the meeting.

16. It was felt there was considerable merit in formalizing the commitment to annual dialogue, preferably during the first quarter of each year, after finalization of FFC preparations.

### Meeting schedules

17. With the increasing difficulty in securing funding for the conduct of meetings, the possibility of combining the FFC Technical Meeting and the Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries was raised. Although it was acknowledged that the membership issue would need to be resolved, it was felt that this could be overcome due to the purely technical nature of these meetings. In addition to considerable cost savings, it was acknowledged that by combining the two meetings the complementary roles of FFA and SPC in addressing fisheries issues would become more apparent to member countries. If approved the combined meeting could be hosted by either FFA or SPC each alternate year. The meeting would need to be scheduled during the first quarter of the year to allow FFA and SPC to report to their respective governing bodies. It was agreed that this matter would be raised at the next Forum Fisheries Committee.

### Communications

18. Improvements in communication utilizing PEACESAT, electronic data transfer and other means were discussed, making timely and regular communication on matters of mutual interest more achievable. This was already occurring.

### Funding

19. Apart from Lome IV, there appears little direct competition for funds between SPC and FFA. Both institutions are experiencing a difficult period financially, particularly with respect to extra-budgetary sources of funds. As a result, member countries are urged to consider new, innovative approaches to financing the activities of the two organisations to support regional activities in the fisheries sector. The secretariats considered a cooperative approach in dealings with donor agencies may lead to an improvement in the medium to long term relationship with donors in some instances.

### **Institutional Arrangements**

20. In view of the rapidly changing economic and political circumstances in the South Pacific region and the fact that at least twelve organisations<sup>1</sup> are currently operating in the marine resources sector, member countries of SPC and FFA are urged to provide direction with respect to planning for medium and long term regional institutional arrangements.

### **OTHER MATTERS**

#### **FAO Tuna Interaction Project**

21. The meeting was advised of a recent request from FAO to SPC for SPC to host the Tuna Interaction Project. The project which is funded from the Japan Trust Fund at FAO, has a budget of US\$ 384,000 for 1992 which will cover the cost of a Project Coordinator and leave US\$ 60,000 available for actual projects. It was considered that there appeared to be little benefit to member countries in having the project based at SPC. It was agreed that this matter would be raised at FFC to seek the guidance of member countries.

#### **Close**

22. In closing the meeting, the value of discussion facilitated through the Colloquium was acknowledged.

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<sup>1</sup> see Attachment B

ATTACHMENT A  
FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY - SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

COLLOQUIUM

(Port Vila, Vanuatu, 14-16 March, 1992)

OBJECTIVES

- (i) Review cooperation and collaboration between FFA/SPC.
- (ii) Identify and address any problems currently existing between the two organisations.
- (iii) Examine the role of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB).
- (iv) Prepare CRGA paper on SPC/FFA cooperation.

AGENDA

1. INTRODUCTION

- Background; overview of mandates; review of existing SPC/FFA linkages, and operational structure
- Procedures, record

2. COASTAL FISHERIES ACTIVITIES

2.1 General review of work plans/future initiatives

- SPC Coastal Programme
- FFA RCU
- FFA Economics, Marketing
- Training

2.2 Areas of mutual interest

3. OCEANIC FISHERIES ACTIVITY

3.1 General review of work plans/future initiatives

- SPC TBAP
- FFA Tuna Management

3.2 Areas of mutual interest

- Regional Database
- Observer Programmes/Treaty Sampling

3.3 Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish



**4. SPC/FFA LINKAGES**

- 4.1 Formal linkages
- 4.2 Meeting Schedules
- 4.3 Communications
- 4.4 Funding

**5. OTHER MATTERS**

- 5.1 FAO Tuna Interaction Project

**PARTICIPANTS**

**FFA** Sir Peter Kenilorea, Director  
Mr Andrew Wright, Deputy Director  
Mr Colin Brown, Surveillance Officer  
Mr Sam Taufao, Senior Analyst Programmer  
Mr Paul Nichols, Manager of EC Projects

**SPC** Mr Julian Dashwood, Fisheries Coordinator  
Dr Antony Lewis, Chief Fisheries Scientist, TBAP  
Mr Gary Preston, Programme Manager, Coastal Fisheries  
Dr John Hampton, Principal Fisheries Scientist, TBAP

## LINKAGES BETWEEN SPC AND FFA

(1) Institutional

SPC	-	observer status	FFC Technical Meeting
	-	observer status (permanent)	FFC
	-	observer status	PNA
	-	adviser	MLTF reviews
	-	adviser	Consultations on South Pacific Albacore
Management.			
	-	member	WPFCC, TPFCC
FFA	-	permanent observer	RTMF
	-	permanent observer	CRGA
	-	permanent observer	South Pacific Conference
	-	member	SCTB
	-	member	SPAR
	-	member	WPYRG
	-	observer	WPFCC, TPFCC.

Both organizations

	-	members	SPOCC
	-	""	Forum Secretariat
	-	""	IMR Steering Committee and Marine Studies Coordinating Committee.

(2) Cooperation in Work Programme activities

Regional Tuna Database  
 Standardization of Regional Register  
 Development of national fisheries statistical systems  
 Software development  
 Observer and port sampling programmes, MLTF  
 Development of communications network  
 Training of PIN fisheries staff  
 Inshore fisheries research (IFRP/RCU)  
 Advisory service to PNA  
 Surveillance input to RTTP  
 Post-harvest product development and marketing  
 Input to FFA Corporate Plan

(3) Other Organizations or Institutions involved in Marine Resource matters, SPC/FFA Region

IMR, USP

FAO/UNDP RFSP

NMFS/WPRFMC (Hawaii and U.S. Territories)

ICLARM

SPREP

SOPAC

ORSTOM/IFREMER

FAO South Pacific Regional Aquaculture Development Project

University of Guam

French University of the South Pacific