

## SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

Twenty-fifth Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries  
(Noumea, New Caledonia 14–18 March 1994)

### COUNTRY STATEMENT

#### FIJI

##### Introduction

The artisanal Fisheries (small scale commercial) has stabilized around 4500 tons of finfish which is mostly caught within the customary fishing right areas. The main fishing emphasis of fisheries sector in the late 80's and early 90's has been to develop the marine resources, and increase fish production. It is now being felt by both the custodians and fishermen, that the marine resource within the customary fishing right areas are diminishing in many localized areas especially around urban centers. Some fisheries are already rapidly declining and strong management regulations have to be imposed to save the stock from crashing.

##### Objectives of Fishery sector

The emphasis of the fisheries sector is as follows:

- a) Consolidate all our efforts in managing our inshore resources, with greater emphasis given to educating the customary fishing rights owners in managing their own resources;
- b) Further develop our offshore resources;
- c) Develop aquaculture both in fresh water and marine resources.

##### Artisanal Fish Production

The number of licenses issued for fishing within the artisanal sector has been increasing in the past years but now it seems to have stabilized around 1700. (see fig 1) Though the price of most of the higher valued fish species has increased last year, the average price of fish remained the same as last year due to an increase in the catch of low priced fish.

**Figure 1. Fish production and the number of fishing licenses issued for the last 10 years**

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Licence	1332	1574	1427	1787	1857	1966	1975	1926	1727
Weight	4515	4337	4710	4744	4767	4769	3957	3958	4579
Price	1.86	1.99	2.33	2.58	2.93	3.28	3.73	3.62	3.61

Source: Fisheries Division Annual Report

**Figure 2. Domestic long line tuna fishery**

Year	Vessels	Catch (Tons)
1989	5	52.63
1990	10	157.86
1991	18	572.43
1992	23	883.42
1993	13	1178.89

There has been a dramatic increase in the sashimi tuna landing (see Fig 2) in the last three years and the industry has been developing rapidly. The development offshore based infrastructure has not kept to its pace. Though the allocated quota for the number of vessels operating in this fishery has never reached the maximum, with the inclusion of fishing industry in the trade free zone (TFZ), the expansion of the fishing fleet is expected.

The Fisheries Division continues to emphasize the quality of the exported products. Moreover all efforts will be made in inspecting export products. Restrictions may be imposed on companies not adhering to the fishery regulation.

### **Fishery Management**

The management of inshore resources will be the biggest challenge to the Fisheries Division. The Customary Fishing Right is itself a resource management system and its use as a management tool has been neglected. Though the modern methods of resource management have been very successful in many cases, the customary fishing rights can be a very effective and much cheaper method of resource management only if the custodians understand the importance of conserving their resources. We will be using all our efforts to emphasize management.