

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

NINETEENTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

(Noumea, New Caledonia, 3 - 7 August, 1987)

COUNTRY STATEMENT - VANUATU

## INTRODUCTION

Fish has been the most important protein source in the diet for the local population which for a lot of areas is the only readily available source. Prior to independence fishing activities were largely limited to near-shore reef and lagoon areas and pursued mainly at a subsistence level. Limited surpluses of fish were offered for sale in local markets, restaurants and hotels this was thought to be in the order of 10 - 10 tonnes annually. It is only since the establishment of the Fisheries department that fisheries has come to be of major economic importance.

## FISH PRODUCTION

Fish products locally commercialized in 1986 was valued at 271,632,000 VT.

Tuna landings at SPFC was 1,186 metric tonnes.

## INDUSTRIAL FISHERIES

Tuna landings all came from Taiwanese longliners.

Table 1: Species composition of landings by long line vessels at Palekula, Espiritu Santo 1983-1986

Species	1983	1984	1985	1986
<u>Metric Tonnes</u>				
Albacore	4,178	3,132	3,058	829
Yellowfin	369	309	516	219
Big eye	204	173	222	59
Others	280	292	236	79
Total	5,031	3,906	4,032	1,186

In early 1987 Vanuatu signed an agreement with U.S.S.R., allowing U.S.S.R. to fish with 8 boats in Vanuatu's 200 mile EEZ. The access fee amounted to US\$1.5 million.

## ARTISANAL FISHERY

The fishery mainly harvest the high value deep bottom species in the offshore reefs.



## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The main aim is to introduce appropriate fishing technics, identifying resources of commercial value and the management of resources being exploited.

Major programmes are:

1. Collection and compilation of fish catch and length frequency data. All fisheries data are being analysed in the HP Vectra computers.
2. Study on growth and maturity of coconut crab. This programme is being carried out by A.C.I.A.R.
3. A programme aimed at spawning juvenile trochus (*trochus niloticus*) in captivity and to reseed over exploited reefs. Spawning has been successful. This programme is to restart again after repairs of damages caused by cyclone Uma.
4. Deep water fish trapping : This project was funded by the French Government. Good catch rates of 7.4 kg per trap set were obtained from depths between 100 and 215 metres.