

SIXTH FISHERIES TECHNICAL MEETING
COUNTRY STATEMENT BY G.E.I.C.

1. GENERAL

Departmental headquarters are at Betio, Tarawa. There has been an increase to headquarter's staff by the addition of a Marine Biologist (U.N.D.P.) and clerical personnel.

1.1. STAFF

- i. Chief Fisheries Development Officer.
- ii. Fisheries Development Officers (3 posts).
- iii. Marine Biologist (1 post)
- iv. Fisheries Assistants (2 posts. Locally recruited).

It regretted that Jerry Liang, Marine Biologist who jointed us in November 1972, was repatriated in April this year on medical grounds. A replacement is being recruited and his arrival expected shortly.

2. SURVEY VESSELS

- 2.1. Locally constructed steel hulled craft, 13 m. (Tekokona), engaged in surveys administered from headquarter's at Tarawa.
- 2.2. Three, Suva-built, 9 m. glass fibre launches. One based at Christmas Is., one at Abemama (Gilbert Is) and formerly, one at Funafuti (Ellice Is). The latter was damaged beyond repair during the October-hurricane.
- 2.3. Four, locally constructed 6½ m. dories: hulls await importation of engines. (This is the subject of a projected working paper by the G.E.I.D.A. Shipyard Manager).
- 2.4. Several miscellaneous craft, skiffs, canoes etc.

3. SURVEYS

3.1. Joint Survey (Live-bait)

A joint venture undertaken by the G.E.I.C. government in conjunction with Van Camps. The survey in the Gilberts was promising up till the disappearance of bait fish and the fleet moved to the Ellice Islands in October, 1972 where the three vessels were wrecked during the hurricane, before practical surveys had commenced.

3.2. Gilbert Islands Surveys

3.2.1. Tuna (General survey)

As in the case of the Joint-Survey, results are indicative of a promising resource.

3.2.2. Dried/Salt cured fish

Survey operating at Abemama: unassessed.

3.2.3. Bait-fish culture

Early plans were interrupted by the illness and departure of Jerry Liang: a programme will be re-opened on arrival of the new biologist.

3.3. Line Islands Surveys

Christmas Island

3.3.1. Brine shrimp

Survey completed: pilot project under consideration.

3.3.2. Tuna-trolling

Surveys have been continuous over 18 months and results are highly satisfactory.

3.3.3. Spiny-lobster

A useful but inevitably limited resource has been identified.

3.3.4. Bait fish

Considered commercially negative.

3.4. Ellice Islands

Original survey programmes were abruptly terminated by the hurricane, but not before determining a substantial tuna resource yet highly unreliable bait-fish population. New surveys have been designed to meet exigencies arising from the hurricane.

3.4.1. Beyond the Reef

A survey of bathypelagic resources accessible by motorised canoes and other low-cost powered small craft. No assessment.

3.4.2. Long-line bait for fish supply

A survey to investigate a sustained supply of long line bait fish including flying-fish and other alternative species. In progress.

3.4.3. Dried/Salt Cured Fish

Investigations are continuing despite unresolved marketing and storage problems.

4. PROJECTS

4.1. Projects on-going

The Fisheries Survey Unit administers four U.K. Aid Granted projects and one U.N.D.P. funded 'country programme': total funding amounts to approximately \$600,000.

4.1.1. Fisheries Survey Unit (U.K. Aid \$280,000)

Administration, infrastructural and overall running costs of the Fisheries Survey Unit.

4.1.2. Funafuti Fisheries Development Complex (U.K. Aid \$110,000)

Infrastructural costs to establish a Fisheries Survey base in the Ellice Islands and for demonstrational programmes with other measures for up-grading the existing subsistence fishery.

4.1.3. Four-dory project (U.K. Aid \$105,000)

The project involves the construction - by the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Development Authority's shipyard division, of four 7.5 m. dories, acquisition of an ice-making plant and 12 months running costs to evaluate the potential of this type of craft under local conditions.

4.1.4. Marine Biologist Counter-part contribution (U.K. Aid \$35,000)

Experimental ponds, field laboratory etc. for the programme designed for the Marine Biologist's appointment.

4.1.4.1. Marine Biologist U.N.D.P. Country Programme (U.N. funded \$70,000)

Emoluments, equipment etc.

4.2. Proposals: planning proposals

These are tentative follow-ups to current surveys and on-going projects. If results from these activities are positive, proposals along the lines described below will be submitted to the government for consideration with a view towards approval and eventual funding.

4.2.1. Twenty-dory survey fleet

If the 4-dory project (4.1.3.) is positive, proposals for a 20-unit fleet are likely to be formulated. This will not be a commercial venture but will investigate the extent to which dory-units could be commercially operated in the Gilbert Islands, i.e. a study to evaluate how many fleets of varying unit size could be operated from the islands. This proposal would include essential support and ancillary facilities.

4.2.2. Christmas Island Tuna Fishery Proposal

This tentative proposal has already been formulated but has not passed through all the channels leading to any ultimate decisions. It is a commercially orientated pilot-project encompassing extended surveys in respect to the pelagic resources of the Line group. It envisages a small-craft fleet of catchers supported by essential transportation and processing facilities etc.

4.2.3. Funafuti Second-stage fisheries development project

No precise planning has commenced but the hopefully anticipated outcome of the on-going Funafuti project (4.1.2.) is likely to be directed towards establishing a long-lining bait supply and developing the 'Beyond the Reef fisheries'.