

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

4th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting

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**Marine Resources Division
Director's Report 2004**

Marine Resources Division
Secretariat of the Pacific Community
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INTRODUCTION

1. This paper is an introduction to the work of the SPC Fisheries Programmes, for those who are not familiar with it, together with a broad overview of Pacific Island regional fisheries issues and SPC's role in them over the past 12 months. It is the report of the SPC executive responsible for SPC fisheries work to the major stakeholders in this Division of the organisation – member government fisheries sector decision-makers.
2. For those accustomed to attending Forum Fisheries Committee meetings, it should be noted that one major difference between this and the FFA Director's report is the different emphasis on administrative issues. This is because member country oversight of SPC is divided amongst sectoral meetings and CRGA¹:- the pivotal committee that decides the overall administrative policy of the joint SPC work-programmes and the balance between them – a role that the Forum Fisheries Committee itself normally plays within FFA in addition to its fisheries policy role. The SPC Director of Marine Resources also has to report to CRGA on administrative and financial issues.
3. The SPC Marine Resources Division does not have a homogenous brief, unlike FFA's remit to coordinate regional aspects of the overall management of tuna fisheries, but is split into two separate programmes², one to work with the region and with member countries and territories in providing *scientific advice to assist in the management of major tuna fisheries*, and one to provide advice and assistance to member countries and territories on the *development, management and conservation of coastal and small-scale domestic fisheries, and aquaculture*. However, FFA and both the SPC Fisheries Programmes work towards the overall vision of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy:

"A healthy Ocean that sustains the livelihoods and aspirations of Pacific Island communities"

4. Both the Oceanic and the Coastal Fisheries Programmes of the SPC Marine Resources Division were reviewed in the period between the 2nd and 3rd SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting, and although it is not intended to present these reviews again, we will report on progress in implementing the accepted recommendations of these reviews (see Information Paper (IP) 1). In addition, a substantial part of the work of the OFP will be reviewed again this year through the review of the EU-funded "PROCFISH/O" project. Part of the review itself will take place on the fringes of this meeting.
5. There should be enough information available at this meeting, particularly through the Programme Strategic Plans (see www.spc.int/mrd/org/org.html), Programme Workplans (see IP2 and IP3) and the previous programme review documents (www.spc.int/mrd/org/org.html), for new HoF participants to obtain an overview of what are the fundamental aims and functionalities of SPC's fisheries programmes without going into detail here, but briefly:-
 - The Oceanic Fisheries Programme provides advice to tuna fisheries managers on the status and prospects of tuna fishery stocks and their ecosystems. It works in close consultation with FFA on regional issues as well as directly with member countries on national oceanic fishery assessments. The OFP has three closely-interrelated sections (see IP2 and IP3 for more information):

¹ Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (usually held in November)

² The SPC Marine Resources Division also technically includes the SPC Regional Maritime Programme, but this is separately managed and administered out of SPC Suva and does not report to the Director of Marine Resources.

- (Oceanic Fisheries) Stock Assessment & Modelling;
 - (Oceanic Fisheries) Statistics & Monitoring;
 - (Oceanic Fisheries) Biology & Ecology.
- The Coastal Fisheries Programme provides supporting advice and expertise to Pacific Island fisheries services on a wide range of issues (apart from tuna fisheries management and science) where solutions are more effectively achieved by regional collaboration. Although it is called the “Coastal” “Fisheries” Programme because it was initially concentrated entirely on issues related to reef fisheries, its development work over the past decade, along with member country’s own development priorities, has been increasingly focussed on small-scale Pacific Island tuna fishery development, and more recently on aquaculture. The CFP currently has 6 sections (see IP2 and the CFP review from 2003³ for more information), which operate in a more decentralised manner than OFP sections, but which have certain notable interdependencies:
 - Fisheries Development (currently focussed on oceanic fishery development);
 - Reef Fisheries Observatory (covers stock assessment, statistics/monitoring and biology/ecology in a similar sense to the OFP work on oceanic pelagics, but is so far only at an early stage);
 - Aquaculture (a relatively new section providing capacity building and institutional support for Pacific Island aquaculture services, and a focal point for a multi-agency regional aquaculture strategy);
 - Coastal Fisheries Management (currently specialised in community and co-management);
 - Human Resource Development (training material and skills development in member country fisheries departments & private sector fisheries);
 - Fisheries Information (regional information networking, and assistance to national fisheries departments in organising and disseminating information).

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION FISHERIES PROGRAMMES

6. As explained in Working Paper 1 last year (www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF3/E-WP1-HOF3.pdf), it is difficult for an organisation like SPC, whose primary purpose is to assist *others* to separate out the organisation’s role in the achievements that it has assisted. It is also difficult to quantify achievements in fields where baseline information is scarce; where monitoring is expensive compared to the value of the activity; and where perceptions are variable, such as artisanal fisheries development or management. The Strategic Programme Plan reports do however provide useful indicators by which the progress of the work-programme can be assessed.

7. HoF is only halfway through the SPC annual budget cycle, and the overall appraisal of achievements for the year against the strategic plan will be considered at CRGA⁴ in November, but the preliminary 6-month programme reports against the 2003 workplan are available as IP2 and IP3. A more detailed idea of the activities and outputs of the fisheries programmes can be gained from these documents.

³ <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF3/E-IP5-HOF3.pdf>

⁴ HoF delegates are encouraged to brief their national or territorial CRGA representatives on fisheries and programme performance issues which may need to be brought up during the SPC governing council meeting.

8. To summarise, recent results which the CFP and OFP have been significantly associated with, or responsible for, include:

Achievements at the Section level

Tuna Stock Assessment and research

- Assisted in regional tuna fishery management decision-making by producing annual regional assessments of the status of bigeye and yellowfin tuna stocks for use by national, regional, and international fisheries managers.
- Produced National (tuna) Fisheries Status Assessments or Tuna Resource Status Reports for Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, and Marshall Islands.
- Developed models to explain the influence of oceanographic conditions on the catch rate of albacore in key domestic tuna fisheries.

Oceanic Fisheries Statistics

9. The section reports no dramatic “newsworthy” achievements, but a steady, solid improvement in the compilation and availability of quantitative information for tuna fishery and bycatch assessment, decision-making, and helping SPC members to fulfil international reporting obligations:

- Helped improve national tuna statistical capacity by providing attachment training for fisheries database staff from Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea and Samoa;
- Provided technical and financial support for port sampling and observer programmes in the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu;
- Maintained technical support for national databases, including provision of logsheet data-input, and continued to compile and disseminate research data on tuna fisheries in the WCPO.

Human Resource Development

10. The Fisheries Training Section was engaged in a great number of training initiatives through the year, but the focus on awareness and mitigation of tuna fishery bycatch is probably the most significant new achievement. This included wide distribution (fisheries administrations, training institutions, private sector) of a package of awareness and training materials on the bycatch issue in the PI tuna longline fishery, including:

- brochure on tuna longlining/bycatch issue (in collaboration other sections)
- manual on protected marine species and the tuna longline fishery
- guidelines for safely releasing hooked turtles (sticker, laminated card, poster)
- marine turtle identification cards
- turtle-friendly fishing boat stickers
- shark identification cards (under production)

Fishery Resource Development

11. The Development Section singles out its most newsworthy achievement since HoF3 as being the successful testing of a new deep setting technique for longline fishing that avoids bycatch and enhances target species CPUE. The trials that took place in Mooloolaba, Queensland, Australia during March to May 2004 were funded by AFMA with in-kind contributions from SPC and two Australian longline fishing companies. Pelagic longlines were successfully set and hauled landing all of the branchlines below the critical depth of 100 metres, where sea turtle encounters, when they happen, normally occur. CPUE for bigeye tuna increased compared to the normal setting practices of the boats involved, but results of these initial trials were only indicative. More testing is required. The project was a good example of different organisations (AFMA, SPC, SeaNet, and the commercial longline fleet in Mooloolaba) working together proactively for the development of a sustainable, environmentally friendly longline fishery in the Pacific

Information

12. The Information Section's most recent achievement is the production of beche-de-mer ID cards for the region, with funding assistance from ACIAR. These materials will assist Pacific Island nations to develop and implement regional, national and local mechanisms, policies and management strategies that promote or foster sustainable practices in the sea cucumber fishery. The sea cucumber fishery is under pressure in several parts of the region and, as some valuable species become difficult to find, new species are exploited and traded. To manage the fishery, it is essential that all components of the trade - fishermen and traders, but also government staff responsible for enforcement of local regulations - are able to clearly identify the different species exploited and their processed product. To facilitate the identification of the 22 main species currently exploited in the region, SPC has produced a set of pocketsize cards, printed on plastic. Each card present one species of sea cucumber, with a full-colour underwater picture of the live animal on one side and two pictures (ventral and dorsal views) of the corresponding dried product (beche-de-mer) on the other side. It also contains some basic information on each species (preferred habitat and depth, average sizes) and a short description of the dried product

Aquaculture

13. The single most newsworthy achievement is probably the development of economic modelling tools for aquaculture and agriculture (seaweed, taro, black pearl, sugarcane, macrobrachium shrimp, tilapia, copra, penaeid prawns, line/net fishing, rice). The toolkit comes on CD-ROM or can be freely downloaded at the Aquaculture Portal (<http://www.spc.int/aquaculture>). It is a simple tool for financial planning which will hopefully improve the profitability of aquaculture ventures. The addition of agricultural commodities is in recognition of the potential for aquaculture to be integrated with terrestrial crop and livestock farming.

Coastal Fisheries Management

14. The main achievement of the Coastal Fisheries Management Section has been to get the Coastal Fisheries Management initiative off the ground following the presentation and endorsement of the initiative at HoF3 in 2003. The initiative is focussed on a set of general strategies⁵ and will involve several partners alongside SPC to assist fisheries administrations, including the Commonwealth Secretariat and the US Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council, and increased collaboration with the SPC Reef Fisheries Observatory and FAO on developing information useful to coastal fishery co-management planning.

⁵ See WP7 on the HoF3 web-page (<http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF3/index.html>)

Reef Fisheries Observatory

15. The Reef Fisheries Observatory continued to work solidly on the massive 5-year task of establishing baseline assessments of reef fisheries across the SPC membership. Of note is the recent approval by the European Union of an extension to the project, which will now be able to cover the whole of the Pacific component of the expanded ACP group of countries as well as French territories. The section recruited a new head, Mary Power, in July 2004, and will recruit several additional staff soon. The coming year will see a set of national reef fisheries assessments produced for the countries where fieldwork has already taken place as well as a regional report. The work of the section will be more specifically detailed during the "PROCFISH Advisory Committee Meeting" that will be convened just prior to HoF.

16. (Note: this is by no means a complete list of things accomplished (see the programme reports for that), but is an edited version of SPC section head's ideas of their sections' most significant achievements).

Developments at the Programme level*Oceanic Fisheries Programme*

17. At the Programme level, a significant focus for the OFP has been support to the region during the continuing negotiation process under the pending Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific, although this support emerges mainly from the ongoing fundamental work of assessing the health of regional tuna stocks and developing an understanding of their supporting ecosystem rather than being a separate activity. Unfortunately, in terms of measurement of OFP achievements, the potential results of this activity are currently imponderable, but since the additional work required is not great, the activity is likely to be cost-effective for the region whatever the final form of the Commission.

18. With the WCP Highly Migratory Fish Stocks Convention now in force, there should be a clearer idea of the scientific work required after the first meeting of the new Commission in December, and there is already a clear understanding that any additional tasks that might be undertaken by the OFP to service this arrangement would be on a full cost-recovery basis, without impacting existing OFP services to member countries.

Coastal Fisheries Programme

19. The main task facing the Coastal Fisheries Programme following the 2003 review has been consolidating the change in the primary focus of the programme from *development* to assisting countries with the *management* of developing fisheries. This has not required a great change in activity, but rather a shift in emphasis. For example, there is now more emphasis on appropriate fishing methods that avoid bycatch, as part of the move towards ecosystem-based management, and training curricula have been revised to more explicitly include fisheries management.

20. However, as the recent Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting in Apia proved, fisheries development is still an overriding concern for many SPC members, and regional organisations exist only to serve the consensus purposes of their members. The Coastal Fisheries Programme does not intend to reduce the development component of its work, but will rather concentrate on promoting development that is sustainable. Development is a fundamental component of fisheries management itself.

Status and trends of fisheries

Oceanic fisheries

21. The Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish, consisting of SPC, coastal State, and distant water fishing Nation scientists, and others, has met each year prior to the Heads of Fisheries meeting, to produce a consensus opinion on the status of tuna stocks in the region. SCTB is immediately before the Heads of Fisheries meeting this year and had not taken place at the time of writing this Report, so the usual overview of fisheries could not be included here. The Executive Summary of the 17th SCTB meeting will however be provided to the 4th Heads of Fisheries meeting (see also www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF4/index.html). In the meantime, the SCTB17 website contains the various input documents that will feed the discussion before the stock status reports are produced (see www.spc.int/oceanfish/Html/SCTB/SCTB17/index.htm).

22. As part of a project implemented through FFA by the Asian Development Bank, SPC is collaborating with a consultant to produce a short publication that explains the issues surrounding the status of Pacific Island tuna stocks in terms that are easily understood by the general public and decision-makers. This is expected to be published later in the year.

23. This HoF meeting itself will include a session on the status and prospects of longline fisheries. Scientific assessment is dependent on data which takes some time to acquire and compile, and the latest *scientific* “snapshot” of the tuna stock is never less than a year old⁶. This HoF session will help to put together the latest “anecdotal” information across the region for a more up-to-date picture of the status of longline fisheries, and provide the material for a discussion about the longer-term prospects and likely limits for the longline fishery. 2003 was a difficult year for longline fisheries, particularly in the South Pacific, and whilst recent reports indicate that catchability is increasing once again, the industry received a shock from which many companies, particularly small companies, did not recover.

Coastal Fisheries

24. Status and trends in coastal fisheries are somewhat less comprehensively monitored and assessed at the regional level, because of their highly diverse, scattered, and non-industrial nature, and because the ranges of coastal fishery stocks are usually localised, with no obligation for international collaboration in their management under UNCLOS⁷. Although FAO members are obliged to report annually to FAO on the production of fisheries and vessels under their jurisdiction, summarised annually in the FAO "State of Fisheries and Aquaculture" ("SOFIA") report (http://www.fao.org/sof/sofia/index_en.htm), most Pacific Island States' capacity to provide detailed, regularly updated statistics for coastal fisheries, particularly subsistence fisheries, is extremely limited. FAO, in collaboration with SPC, will be running another regional workshop later in the year to help address this need.

⁶ The latest SPC comprehensive overview, produced in July 2004, is actually for the 2002 season (“The Western And Central Pacific Tuna Fishery 2002: Overview And Status Of Tuna Stocks - <http://www.spc.int/oceanfish/Docs/Research/wcptf.htm>)

⁷ although Agenda 21 does reflect an agreement by developed States to assist developing States to accomplish their management.

25. To date, there has been no regular regional status, or "early warning" report on coastal fisheries, analogous to the tuna fishery overview⁸. Issues that could benefit from a concerted regional approach (such as the potential for management crisis in the itinerant Live Reef Food Fish Trade in the mid-1990s) are brought to the attention of the region in an ad-hoc manner, if at all. One of the purposes of the coastal component of the EU-funded PROCFISH project is to enable the SPC Reef Fisheries Observatory to produce an annual regional status report on coastal fisheries, as well as the information that will be produced to help guide reef fisheries management at the local and national levels. However, despite my promise in 2003 that such a regional overview would be produced, based on the available information, for the 4th SPC Heads of Fisheries meeting, this was not possible owing to a last minute falling-through of a planned collaboration, and the vacancy (recently filled) in the Reef Fisheries Observatory Coordinator post. This regional coastal fisheries overview will be pushed to the top of the queue for production in 2005.

26. The main regional worries in the status and trends of Pacific Island coastal fisheries continue to be this need for better information itself, along with several "problem fisheries" and issues, anecdotally as follows:-

- Live Reef Food Fish Trade – has not recovered to the levels experienced in the past, following a series of adverse events: the Asian economic slump; the bankruptcy of the main Hong Kong importer (following a "red tide" which wiped out the stock on hand; and several cases of ciguatera fish poisoning in Hong Kong. The potential for rapid expansion however remains, particularly as the Chinese economy develops, and this "lull" is a useful opportunity for Pacific Island countries to make sure that their regulatory, licencing and reporting procedures are in good enough shape to react quickly. This is a fishery that can be very quickly overfished. A summary will be presented during HoF4 by the SPC Live Reef Fisheries Adviser.
- The Live Reef aquarium trade (both fish and "live rock") continues to expand in several countries, particularly Fiji, where the last quarterly review by the Fiji Fisheries Department suggests that Fiji now has the world's 4th most valuable export trade in tropical marine organisms. Although this is only 4% of the total world trade, and lags a long way behind the Philippines and Indonesia, the Fiji industry directly employs 300 people and 5 exporting companies. There will be a presentation on the trade by the Marine Aquarium Council.
- Deepwater snapper – a non-traditional fishery in most countries, this is a comparatively fragile resource, and prone to overcapacity. SPC prepared a quick summary of Pacific Island deepwater snapper fisheries for discussion at the meeting in New Zealand in November 2003 on artisanal deepwater fisheries, organised by FAO, and this is available on the HoF4 website⁹. There was generally a worry that small-scale longliners might turn wholesale to deepwater snapper fishing if tuna catch rates continued to decline, but this switch in fishing methods does not appear to have occurred in many places. Catching deepwater snapper is generally more difficult than catching the same value of longline tuna.
- Domestic longline fisheries are starting to pick up after the problems of the last year. The drop in catch rates, whilst exacerbated by local heavy fishing in certain areas, can be correlated to some extent with certain oceanographic events, and it will be useful if OFP research makes it possible to predict, or at least closely track, such events in future. As always, investors need to beware of overcapitalising in good years, and should take into account the likelihood of future changes in catch rates.

⁸ <http://www.spc.int/oceanfish/Docs/Research/wcptf.htm>

⁹ www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF4/pdf/snapper.pdf

- Trochus fisheries are apparently suffering from a downturn in world market price, and it would be useful to share country experiences of this at HoF3. The trochus shell trade is very narrowly based upon the demand for shirt buttons, which in turn is subject to the vagaries of the fashion industry. This is in contrast to, say, sea-cucumber, where demand is always far higher than supply, and where the occasional moratorium on beche-de-mer export is like putting money into a savings account. Trochus are much more resilient in the face of fishing, and it is likely to be more financially efficient to actively manage the crop to prevent unusable older shells taking over the population.
- Risk management of introduced aquatic species – is a need that grows along with the growth of aquaculture enterprise, and this will be discussed during a special session on aquaculture at HoF3.

27. This is only a brief list of current issues based on the kind of requests that the SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme receives from members, and would benefit from discussion and input by this 4th Heads of Fisheries Meeting. One of the purposes of HoF is to define a regional idea of what the most pressing issues actually are, so the CFP can accordingly refine the track of its work-programme, or otherwise seek support for members. Some of these issues will emerge during the round-table discussion early in the week. Additional issues or altered priorities will emerge as the meeting continues, and a final list of “pressing domestic fisheries issues” can be discussed on the final day, for inclusion in the meeting outputs, if the meeting wishes.

28. In the context of developing better regional overviews of coastal fisheries, the Fisheries Development Section has been compiling a summary of the fisheries development in various SPC member countries and territories, which will be made available to HoF4 and on the website, and the Fisheries Training Section maintains a register of fisheries training institutions¹⁰. Bob Gillett and colleagues have produced some very useful regional fisheries overviews in recent years, under commission from FFA, the Asian Development Bank¹¹ and others, and we highly recommend these.

Divisional Administration and Finance

29. Both the OFP and CFP have been comprehensively reviewed in the recent past and will thus not come onto the SPC programme review calendar until the next corporate plan cycle. However, individual projects and activities continue to be reviewed by donors and partners. We had hoped to present the draft review of the Oceanic component of the EU PROCFISH project at HoF4, but delays in approval have meant that the reviewers will actually be conducting some of the consultation components of the review at this meeting, and presenting the report later.

30. Another review that we have recently been involved in is The Nature Conservancy’s review of its Live Reef Fish work under the Memorandum of Understanding between TNC, SPC and the International Marinelife Alliance. Although this was a review by TNC for its own purposes, the collaborative nature of the work means that it is relevant to SPC and IMA, and we hope to make a copy of the review available to HoF participants when it is released. SPC does however intend to act upon one of the recommendations of the review – that the MOU involving TNC and SPC in collaborative fisheries work be renewed. At the time of writing it was not clear if this MOU would be developed in time for signature at HoF4.

¹⁰ available at http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/Training_Directory/index.htm

¹¹ The report on the contribution of fisheries to Pacific Island economies is available in full on the ADB website library of publications at www.adb.org

31. The SPC Corporate Plan is almost exactly halfway through its triennial duration and work on reviewing the overall performance of SPC under the Corporate Plan, and assessing its constituent programmes through their respective Strategic Programme Plans, will take place during the course of 2005. We intend to hold a HoF5 meeting in 2005 to (amongst other things) help us with the task of refocussing and redrafting the fisheries programme strategic plans for the triennium 2006-8.

32. We continue to be fairly successful in acquiring funding to maintain the work-programme – at least neither the CFP nor the OFP have become smaller over the course of the year, and this relative security is in no small part due to the consolidation of the three largest SPC member donors' "voluntary contributions" into one programme fund that supports the main framework of the work-programme in the same way that member assessed ("core") contributions fund the SPC administration, programme management and support infrastructure. This programme fund has been extremely healthy in 2004 as a result of exchange-rate gains against the French Pacific franc and Fiji dollar (SPC's two operating currencies) by the currency of SPC's main financial contributor – Australia. This relative affluence may not continue in 2005 however – exchange rates go down, as well as up (as we experienced in the early-mid 1990s), and SPC core funding will need to make up the shortfall caused by the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from SPC membership, and this will probably impact programme funding.

33. Like last year, I would emphasise that SPC is strongly aware that, unlike private enterprise and other spheres of human endeavour, the success of its programmes is not measured by their size, survival or financial throughput, but by the quality and the appropriateness of the service they provide to the region. If services could be better provided through another emergent mechanism (particularly capacity expansion by member countries themselves), if existing services become obsolete, or if new priorities arise, SPC needs to be both able to detect these, and flexible enough to change, or even to divest itself of certain work-areas.

Linkages

34. The fisheries programmes of the SPC Marine Resources Division maintain a diverse set of institutional linkages in addition to their primary linkages to member country and territory fisheries administrations.

35. Rather than detail these here I would refer readers to last year's Director's report (www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF3/E-WP1-HOF3.pdf), to the Divisional website (www.spc.int/mrd/asides/Other_orgs/index.html), and make a few additional points on matters arising.

- With the University of the South Pacific taking on a renewed focus in fisheries education we wish to consolidate our interaction by agreeing to a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations. Originally this was intended to be a technical-level MOU between the USP Marine Studies Programme and the SPC Marine Resources Division, but it now appears that this may become an organisational-level framework MOU, with an annex detailing specific collaboration on marine resource issues. Hopefully this revised draft will be ready in time for the HoF meeting, but the preliminary draft will be made available on the website.
- FFA is the most important regional linkage for the SPC Fisheries programmes, and the MOU between the two organisations was revised and expanded in 2003 at the annual SPC/FFA work-programming Colloquium. SPC was also been invited to take part in a small "Reflections Group", in Honaria in August, to comment on the preliminary draft of the new FFA Strategic Plan that will be revised and presented to members for discussion later in the year.

- The linkage between SPC and the new WCP HM Fish Stocks Commission remains to be formalised, and will need to be addressed after the first meeting of the Commission in December in Pohnpei. However, the operational linkages between the OFP and the planned Scientific Committee of the Commission are likely to be considerable. This Committee is likely to take over the role of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish.
- SPC is formally linked with other Pacific Island regional intergovernmental agencies through CROP – the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific. CROP itself recently underwent major review, and has acquired a new set of Terms of Reference, and the Pacific Regional Cooperation Plan that is under development by the Forum is likely to have a strong impact on the way that we work together.
- A French Governmental Coral Reef Initiative programme will be based at SPC (with full cost-recovery in the same manner as the autonomous Worldfish office), and this will itself provide additional linkages with its collaborating agencies, particularly SPREP and IRD.

36. Our linkages with the private sector and national or local NGOs will of course continue to be mediated through governments and administrations. We would reiterate our hope that governments can identify a focal point for industry and NGO communication, perhaps in the same way that certain governments designate a “peak” body to represent non-governmental and industry groups in each key sector. The FFA/SPC EU “DevFish” project (that will be briefly described at HoF4) will itself be of assistance in helping to activate or strengthen national fishing industry representative bodies.

CONCLUSION

37. This Director’s Report is provided as a general update on SPC-relevant fisheries and institutional issues, for the benefit of participants at the 4th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting. Further details are provided in other presentations or are otherwise available.

38. Although it is not intended primarily as a discussion paper, since many of the topics here will be discussed later in the meeting agenda or brought up during round-table discussion, the Chair may decide that certain issues may warrant immediate discussion or clarification.

August 2004