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Aquaculture Sessions Notes

Coastal Fisheries Programme
Marine Resources Division
Secretariat of the Pacific Community
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Aquaculture Session Notes

The space allotted in the agenda for this topic is small, compared to the high significance of the issues that we are attempting to squeeze into it, but there was recently a specific regional meeting on aquaculture issues, organised by the FAO South Pacific Aquaculture Development Project, in Nadi in March, at which many of these issues were addressed. We probably thus already have enough information to make informed decisions on regional aquaculture, and the main purpose of this session is to update ourselves on some topical issues, and to provide the opportunity for signalling member country views within the SPC context, as necessary.

Aquaculture is not yet a specific part of the SPC work-programme, despite our hopes for giving substance to the wishes of member countries that we develop a regional level of aquaculture support (see appended 1998 “mini-RTMF” outcomes). It is clear that a dedicated aquaculture section or programme is likely to be necessary to support member aspirations in this rapidly-developing area, but at the moment we can only address aquaculture issues as another miscellaneous fisheries issue, with occasional advisory and ad-hoc attachment activities. The main part of our current effort in aquaculture is thus actually devoted to sourcing funding to implement an aquaculture project and a special interest group, and we naturally hope that this session will also draw further attention to regional needs in this area.

This short session is currently divided into three miscellaneous parts:

- an update on seaweed farming by Erick Ask and Steve Why;
- briefings on the current status of regional aquaculture activities by Hideyuki Tanaka; Tim Pickering, Johann Bell and others,
- notice of SPC’s intention to review the status of aquaculture in the region, for presentation at the NACA Asia-Pacific Aquaculture 2000 conference, and a request for SPC members to help us with details of national aquaculture capabilities and issues;

If these issues generate substantial additional discussion then the meeting can be reopened as an informal breakout session, for those interested.

The agreed outputs of the Second Pacific Community Fisheries Management Workshop and “Mini-RMTF”, Noumea, 12-16 October 1998, included the following statement:

“The meeting made several recommendations concerning the proposed new work area for SPC in aquaculture:-

(a) Recognising the fundamental and seminal role that Japanese assistance, advice and cooperation has played in the development of aquaculture in many countries of the region, the meeting directly appealed to the Government of Japan to consider extending its support to bridge the likely gap between the ending of the FAO South Pacific Regional Aquaculture Project and the proposed inception of the SPC Aquaculture Programme in 2000. Continued support would assist in the transfer of responsibilities and capabilities from the international to the regional programme over the course of 1999. Mr Tanaka’s outstanding role in making a significant contribution to the development of aquaculture in the region was specifically commended;

(b) The "Regional Aquaculture Strategy" was endorsed by the meeting to guide regional institutions in coordinating the efficient provision of future aquacultural advice and assistance to Pacific Community island member countries and territories. SPC was urged not to slacken its continued efforts to obtain the resources necessary to implement an Aquaculture Programme in January 2000 in order to complement the aquaculture capabilities of national aquaculture projects, USP, and ICLARM CAC and relevant specialisations of other projects, with efficient outreach, extension, member consultation and clearing-house activities;

(c) Given the increasingly high priority attached to aquaculture by members, it was recommended that SPC seek the resources necessary to implement an additional Special Interest Group network and Bulletin covering interests in this sector.”