

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

FOURTEENTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 2-6 August 1982)

Letter from Acting Director of Fisheries, Papua
New Guinea, with reference to Observer Programmes. The points
outlined in this letter are useful background for discussion.



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Date: 16th June, 1982
Our Reference:
Action Officer: J.LOCK:nm
Designation: a/Chief Biologist

Your Reference: CONF 2/9/12/1
Date: 14/5/82

Dear Bob,

Thankyou for your letter of 14 May, 1982 in which you give some details of the oceanic fisheries items which will be included in the Fourteenth Regional Technical Meeting to be held in August.

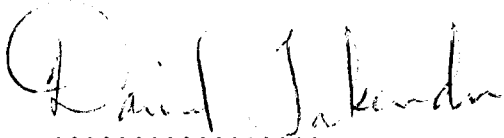
With reference to Item 9, Observer Programmes, I found the correspondence you attached to your letter of interest and would like to add the following comments:-

1. The observer programme objectives should be:
 - (a) to ensure the accuracy of catch data returns;
 - (b) to collect additional biological and fishing activity related information;
 - (c) to collect landings and market information when vessels reach port;
 - (d) to provide training to fisheries personnel, including inspectors, biologists and technicians.
2. From our experience the best reports are those provided by observers who are trained biologists. Fisheries Inspectors unless they have more training, can do little useful work. This has an important bearing on the availability of suitable observers, since biologists tend to be committed to other research programmes. Training of other personnel such as technicians, must be considered a high priority.
3. Discussions are needed to establish what biological information should be collected and for what purposes. Specifically in Papua New Guinea we would consider collecting information on yellowfin.
4. Whilst an observer programme goes some way to overcome the problem of misreporting, there will always be a degree of unreliability in the recording if access fees and catch statistics are related. Perhaps this problem could be discussed at the meeting.

5. Whilst a regional observer programme is something to be aimed for there are major difficulties in placing the enforcement/compliance control function on a regional basis and this might jeopardise the primary role of observers.

I look forward to hearing how discussions progress at the Technical Meeting. One last point, we would be grateful if the raw data forms could be returned as soon as possible.

With best wishes,



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DANIEL R. TAKENDU,
a/Director of Fisheries.