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SPREP
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Statement of Outcomes from the Fifth Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM5), Honiara

1. On July 24th, 2024, ministers from the Cook Islands, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu convened in Honiara, Solomon Islands, for the Fifth Annual Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting.
2. Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Tokelau and Vanuatu were represented at the senior official level. French Polynesia expressed their apologies.
3. Ministers extended their gratitude to the government and people of the Solomon Islands for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements.
4. Ministers commended and acknowledged the participation and assistance of Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), including the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The support from the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office (PNAO) was also greatly appreciated. Following approval from Ministers at the start of the meeting, the European Union also participated as an observer at RFMM5.

Ministerial Chair

5. Ministers extended their gratitude to the Honourable John Silk of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, commending his exceptional dedication and hard work in leading the 4th Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting in 2023. Ministers thanked the outgoing Ministerial Chair, Honourable Senator David Kramer on behalf of Honourable Minister Anthony Muller, for their work.
6. The assembly warmly welcomed Honourable Mona AINU'U, Minister for Natural Resources from Niue, as the Chair of the Fifth Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM5).

RFMM5 Rules of Procedure

7. Ministers directed the SPC and FFA Secretariats to lead on the review of the RFMM TOR and develop a draft RFMM Rules of Procedure for consideration at RFMM6.

New Caledonia civil unrest

8. Following the Director General of SPC update on the civil unrest experienced in New Caledonia in 2024, ministers expressed solidarity with the people of New Caledonia and gratitude to staff at SPC. They also expressed their deepest condolences for the recent passing of Dr Tim Pickering from SPC and recognised his immense contribution to the region.

Outcomes of the 16th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting

9. Ministers noted the outcomes of the 16th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting (HoF16).
10. Ministers discussed the importance of the Regional Observer Program and that the foundations of the program be well designed and Regional Observer Cost Recovery funds utilised effectively and efficiently.
11. Ministers emphasised the critical and urgent resourcing needs for coastal fisheries and aquaculture given the importance of strong coastal fisheries science and development. They also recommended consideration of SPC FAME's organisational structure and resourcing to increase delivery of coastal fisheries and aquaculture support to members.
12. Ministers acknowledged the GESI summit co-hosted by FFA and SPC and encouraged both Secretariats to identify further cross cutting areas for collaboration.
13. Ministers highlighted the ongoing challenges of improving data quality and quantity for coastal fisheries, and expressed gratitude for assistance and the need for further support.

Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture

2024 Coastal Fisheries Report Card - Draft

14. Ministers welcomed the progress made towards the goals of the Future of Fisheries Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries and reiterated the importance of adequate resourcing within SPC to support the region to achieve these goals.
15. Ministers noted the improvements in data quality and availability at both national and regional levels. They emphasised concern over ongoing data gaps and the need to address the remaining gaps in reporting to Leaders.
16. Ministers acknowledged challenges in accurately capturing the full economic contribution and value of coastal fisheries and aquaculture, and commended SPC for leading on this challenge.

Update on the implementation of the "Pacific Framework for Action on Scaling-up Community-Based Fisheries Management: 2021-2025"

17. Ministers acknowledged the considerable progress made over the past three years in implementing the Framework by member countries, territories and partners.

18. Ministers endorsed the five-year extension of the Framework for Action (2026-2030) which aims to continue critical technical support to members, complete outstanding tasks and address emerging demands in scaling up CBFM.
19. Ministers directed SPC to postpone the review of the Framework from 2026 to 2028 given the framework is considered fit-for-purpose.
20. Ministers noted the risk to the successes achieved to date if resourcing is not sustained given communities across the Pacific are at varying degrees of implementation and the importance of CBFM to the livelihoods, culture and food security for our people. Ministers called on development partners to increase sustainable and nationally accessible funding for the scaling-up of CBFM.
21. Ministers recognised the role of CBFM in improving coastal fisheries sustainability, strengthening fish-based livelihoods and food security, and achieving international conservation commitments. They highlighted that traditional practices and values fundamental to culture should be promoted in scaling efforts.
22. Ministers called on members, development partners, and CBFM practitioners to accelerate progress on gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) in CBFM that is appropriate to local traditional and cultural practices.
23. Ministers noted the threat of climate change on coastal fisheries and the need for focus and solutions in this area given the impact on coastal communities.

Climate change and fisheries

Update of COP28 and progress in preparations for COP29 and the One CROP support

24. Ministers noted SPREP's leadership of the One CROP, the updates from COP28 and the progress of preparations by the One CROP in the lead up to and at the UNFCCC COP29.
25. Ministers highlighted the need to champion fisheries issues within the COP process.

Update on Climate Change Variability Assessment Report

26. Ministers noted the progress on the Pacific regional climate change assessment for fisheries and aquaculture. They highlighted the importance of this work, particularly the country-specific recommendations to inform management responses.

Marine pollution and fisheries

Addressing Plastic Pollution

27. Ministers emphasised the importance of cross-CROP collaboration in the development of measures addressing plastic pollution, in particular where those measures impact upon marine resource and fisheries management.

28. Ministers acknowledged the leadership of the Government of Vanuatu as the Pacific SIDS Chair and requested the SPREP Secretariat to continue coordinating and providing support from CROP and all interested Pacific agencies, to ensure effective and unified support for our Pacific Island Members during the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee on Plastic Pollution negotiation process.
29. Ministers acknowledged existing donor partners and encouraged financial support from other donor partners to assist with the negotiation process.

Regional Initiatives

Update on Implementation Plan for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Review of Regional Architecture

30. Ministers welcomed the efforts of Members and CROP on the implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Review of Regional Architecture, including the update on the 2050 Baseline Report and the MEL plan.

Update on the review of regional fisheries policies: The Regional Fisheries Roadmap and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries

31. Ministers acknowledged the update in supporting members with the review of key regional fisheries policies and endorsed the revised timeline for the review. They also acknowledged the importance of member input for the quality of the review.

Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity (UBPP) Initiative

32. Ministers noted the update on the initiative and supported UBPP as a way to progress priorities on sustainable ocean management under the 2050 Strategy. They acknowledged the leadership of Palau and Tonga in UBPP.
33. Ministers stressed the need for this process to be Pacific-led and underlined the need to define the 30 by 30 targets in ways that take into account national contexts and aspirations, informed by scientific and technical guidance from SPC and FFA. They encouraged all relevant CROP organisations to engage with members to explore member driven approaches to meeting the 30 by 30 target.
34. Ministers welcomed the member-led and co-design approach and highlighted the need for further consultation and stakeholder engagements.

Items for Noting

Progress on implementation of outcomes from the 4th Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting

35. Ministers noted the progress made by CROP agencies on the implementation of outcomes from the RFMM4.

Other matters

36. The government of Niue welcomed all RFMM Ministers to Niue for RFMM6 in July 2025.
37. The Chair extended gratitude to the Minister and people of Nauru for the opportunity to take up the Chair for this meeting.
38. Members expressed their deep gratitude to the outgoing Director General of FFA. As the first female to take on the role, including navigating through the difficulties of COVID to maintain the FFA vaka through those years, Ministers expressed their profound thanks.