

SPC/Fisheries 20/WP.30
1 August 1988

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

TWENTIETH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 1 - 5 August 1988)

COUNTRY STATEMENT

VANUATU

COASTAL ARTISANAL

The VFDP (Village Fisheries Development Programme project) was launched in 1982 as a micro project with the objectives to:-

- promote the development of small scale fishing in Vanuatu.
- create employment opportunities in rural areas.
- decrease problems of urban drift.
- reduce dependence on imported tinned fish and improve nutrition.
- provide capital for the development of local projects.

The original plan called for the establishment of 25 village fishing projects to be set up in suitable locations throughout the country over a three year period (82-84). However, due to the strong interest generated amongst the local population, the number of fishing enterprises set-up within the period exceeded the targeted figure. The programme was therefore, revised into a macro project with basically the same objectives but, have a larger scope of operation in order to cater for this growing interest amongst Ni-Vanuatu wanting to get into the fishery.

This resulted a rapid expansion of a new fishery. The department of fisheries gave consideration to and considered it necessary to slow down in order to look carefully look at what has already been established. Therefore after 1986 a decision was reached by the department not to approve or start any more new projects and emphasis was therefore placed on consolidation of the programme which was seen as essential in order to give more attention to the already established enterprises but also keep the number at some optimal level for safe measure until further knowledge is acquired on the fishery . A comprehensive evaluation of the project was therefore carried out during the year, (of which a report will be ready by mid-1988).

The consolidation and evaluation carried out on the programme will allow for:

- (a) better support and monitoring of established fishing projects.
- (b) review of development trends and methods so far pursued.
- (c) basis for future directions of the programme.

The Total fish production for 1987 compared to 1986 was dropped by about 30 tonnes and the level of fishing enterprises in operations in 1987 was lower than that of 1986. This perhaps clearly reflected the difficulties caused by cyclone Uma and the adverse weather conditions experienced throughout the year. Therefore, this drop in the production can be considered as temporary.

The two weeks annual village fisheries meeting for fishermen was held in October/November and was attended by 25 village fishermen. The meeting started off with discussions on the progress and difficulties fishermen have faced. Unlike other meetings in the past, the whole meeting was chaired by the fishermen themselves and this saw more fishermen contributing actively to the discussions. The major part of the meeting concentrated on improving the standard of bookkeeping of the fishermen which is still a weakness for a lot of fishermen. The filling out of daily fishing records are improving especially amongst the more experience fishermen but the younger fishermen still require some assistance. A fair time was spent on doing exercises on filling out records with the fishermen.

The department has also (through ICOD funding Canada) sent a group of village fishermen from the programme on a two weeks study of Japan and New Zealand. The tour was to observe how a small scale commercial handline fishery ideal for Vanuatu operate in the larger fishing nations, which Vanuatu fishermen can adopt. Report on the tour has been positive (refer to attached report of the tour). Participants on the tour have gained some knowledge and practical experience on fish catching, handling, preservation, marketing and the types of boats used. The 5 fishermen on the tour were carefully selected, being upper level fishermen having the potential to develop. It is hoped that the experience from such a tour will generate in the fishermen, the fishing attitude commercial fishermen overseas have, which Vanuatu fishermen lack. They should be a motivation for other fishermen and will form the nucleus for the next generation of fishermen in the country, fishermen who are more commercially orientated.

FISHERIES EXTENSION PROJECT.

The setup of a fisheries extension service which was foreseen in previous years to be the permanent substitute for the VFDP is finally under way. Funds have been secured from the EDF under lome III to set up nine fisheries extension centres for nine Local Government centres.

Each centre will have accommodation for one extension advisor expatriate and a local counter-part trainee officer. They will be equipped with a workshop for doing small repairs on outboard motors etc, a gear store to stock fishing gear including a fuel dump for fuel supplies, run an ice machine to produce ice. This set up will be in line with the Government plans for decentralization.

OCEANIC FISHERIES

The development of oceanic fisheries in Vanuatu is based on the operations of the South Pacific Fishing Company in Santo in the Northern Vanuatu. The company is now 100% owned by the Government and its activity is currently restricted to trial fishing and beef processing storage. The Government intends to utilise foreign expertise in this fishery and is currently inviting proposals from foreign fishing and investment groups. Foreign fishing activity in Vanuatu is currently limited to Taiwanese long line vessels fishing for albacore. Approximately thirty such vessels are currently licensed to fish in Vanuatu's EEZ.