

## Papua New Guinea set to become the tuna capital of the world

*Steven Poning, National Fisheries Authority Publication Officer*

*The fishing industry in Papua New Guinea (PNG), particularly investments in the tuna industry, will continue to grow following the path set by its well-established tuna management plans. The National Fisheries Authority (NFA) has established excellent fisheries conservation and management measures while at the same time promoting and developing onshore processing investments. PNG's tuna fisheries management and conservation measures are well recognised throughout the region.*

Sylvester Pokajam, Managing Director of NFA revealed that fisheries are more sustainable than mineral extraction, and PNG — through NFA — has ensured that its marine resources are caught or harvested within limits set by management plans in order to be fully sustainable.

The PNG government signed a project agreement with Majestic Seafood Ltd for the construction of a tuna cannery in the Malahang Industrial Centre in Lae. Mr Pokajam said that “...in fisheries, our vision is: what is caught in PNG waters must be processed and exported so that revenues are fully maximised in PNG”. “We want down-stream processing so that money is circulated within the country by way of providing spin-off benefits and employment opportunities”, he added.



*Ground breaking ceremony at the Majestic Seafood cannery construction site.*

The cannery will be built in two stages: at the end of the first phase, the factory should reach a processing capacity of 150 t of tuna per day, which will rise to 350 t/day when the second phase is completed. It is expected that this new cannery will create close to 7,000 jobs.

Two more tuna processing operations will be established in Lae at Malahang once all formalities are completed.

1. IFC (International Food Corporation), which already produces canned mackerel, will add a tuna processing line to their factory. It will process 150 t of tuna per day.
2. Zhoushan Zhenyang Deep-Sea Fishing Company will build a plant to process 250–300 t/day. The new plant will employ 3,000 local workers.

Augusto Natividad, Director of Majestic Seafood, said that between his company and the other two companies, Lae alone will be able to process 750 t of tuna per day. He said this will be great, as it will almost reach the production levels of the Philippines.

Speaking during the ground breaking ceremony of Majestic Seafood Limited in the Morobe Province, the Minister for Fisheries, Mr Ben Semri announced that investors in the fisheries sector are stepping into PNG because of the conservation and management plans for fisheries and marine resources that are in place and also because of the government policy in this sector. Mr Semri said the National Fisheries Authority has done a lot in terms of developing the fisheries sector and he thanked the Managing Director of National Fisheries Authority, Mr Sylvester Pokajam, for it.

<sup>1</sup> A joint venture between Thai Union Manufacturing Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of Thai Union Frozen Products PCL., Century Canning Corporation Co., Ltd., and Frabelle Fishing Corporation, Ltd. established Moresby International Holdings, which in turn established Majestic Seafood Corporation in PNG. Each partner invests in 33.33% of the total registered capital of USD 1,500,000. The purpose of Majestic Seafood Ltd is to manage tuna fishing businesses in PNG waters and surrounding areas as well as sourcing raw materials needed for manufacturing. PNG has an abundant supply of tuna resources, enabling Majestic Seafood Ltd to have greater access to raw materials. In addition, products manufactured and exported from PNG to European countries are eligible for custom duty privileges.

(Source: Thai Union Frozen Products PCL. website: <http://www.thaiuniongroup.com/home/home.php?pro=company>, visited 11 October 2010)