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A SUMMARY OF FISHERIES LEGISLATION IN KIRIBATI

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In Kiribati, the majority of the people are subsistence fishermen. Fish is the local people's main diet and most available source of protein, therefore careful monitoring and management of the fishery resources is very necessary.

Generally the islands of Kiribati with the exception of South Tarawa are still very much underpopulated and therefore the fishing power is considered still low for any overfishing to occur.

Comparing the different islands, there are slight differences in the social and economic activities which may affect their fishing activities; e.g in some islands fishermen prefer to fish alone while in others they prefer to fish in groups. Also some islands have lagoons while others do not. This will mean different types of marine resources, different fishing methods and possibly canoe types.

Additionally there is very little known about the fish stocks of the islands and therefore at present it would be very unfair and unjustified to start implementing prohibitive fisheries regulations. For these reasons Kiribati presently has very few fisheries regulations in respect to the Inshore Fishery Resources.

Below is a summary of the few Inshore Fisheries Regulations that presently exist. A more detailed account of these can be found in the Kiribati Fisheries Ordinance (a copy of which is available at this workshop):

1. Prohibition of the catching, taking or killing, of Panulirus lobsters with a carapace length of less than 85 millimetres and any female rock lobsters carrying eggs.
2. Local fishing vessels of seven metres or more adapted for commercial fishing must pay and obtain a licence. The present licence fee is \$40.00.
3. Fishing using explosives, poison and other noxious substances is illegal.
4. Fishing without authority in any sea, lagoon or on any reef forming part of an ancient customary fishing ground of any kainga (extended family) is illegal. This regulation is intentionally for the protection of native customary rights.

5. Prohibition of fishing in specific areas namely

- Asur lagoon

- Pelican lagoon

- Isles lagoon

- The Tonga Channel and the adjoining Artemia Ponds

These prohibited areas are in Christmas Island.

6. Fish Processing Establishments have to pay a prescribed fee which varies with the grade of the establishment.

7. Under the Wildlife Ordinance a regulation exists prohibiting the hunting, killing or capture of any wild turtles on land and the collecting of turtle eggs. This regulation is specifically for protecting the turtles when they are laying their eggs on land.

8. Foreign Fishing vessels must pay an access fee and are required to comply with the conditions of the access agreement laid out before they are allowed entry to fish within the territorial fishery limits of Kiribati.

In South Tarawa the Fisheries Data Collection Programme has indicated that estimated fish catches are approaching estimated values of Maximum Yield with the potential of overfishing in the near future. Therefore there is an immediate need to investigate and formulate a management policy including the implementation of fisheries regulations. Suggestions are presented in the paper prepared by Mees. ish catches are approaching estimated values of Maximum Yield with the potential of overfishing in the near future. Therefore there is an immediate need to investigate and formulate a management policy including the implementation of fisheries regulations. Suggestions are presented in the paper prepared by Mees.