

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

**1<sup>st</sup> SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting**  
*(Noumea, New Caledonia, 9–13 August 1999)*

**Information Paper 1**

Original: English

**Statement by  
FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands  
Fisheries Programme  
Apia, Samoa



**STATEMENT  
BY  
FAO SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands  
Fisheries Programme**

1. The FAO Office in Apia was upgraded to a sub-regional office in 1996, known by its acronym SAPA, and has since expanded its activities in the area of natural resource management in the South Pacific. The establishment of SAPA is a tangible reflection of FAO's desire to decentralize and to bring its operations closer to its member countries of the Pacific. SAPA's mandate is to galvanize regional efforts towards food security.

SAPA consists of 18 staff; including 6 Technical Officers (**fisheries**, integrated resource management, farming systems development & marketing, plant protection, forestry resource management and food & nutrition), a Policy Officer, 2 Associate Professional Officers (**marine resources information** and women in agriculture & rural development), a National Professional Officer and a Programme Assistant under overall managerial and administrative leadership of the Sub-Regional Representative.

2. FAO member countries in the region are the Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Niue, Palau and the Marshall Islands have formally applied for FAO membership this year. It is anticipated that their applications will be confirmed at the FAO Conference later this year. Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Federated States of Micronesia are also considering the membership.

3. FAO implements the Programme of Fisheries Assistance for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The overall objectives of the Programme are to enable SIDS to adopt and implement policies and measures to ensure that;

- the capacity of fisheries administrations in SIDS is strengthened,
- fisheries resources are conserved, managed, developed and utilized in a rational manner,
- national food security is enhanced, and
- the utilization of fisheries resources continue to contribute to national economic and social development on a sustainable basis.

The Programme is focused on six areas.

- (1) Institutional strengthening and national capacity building.
- (2) Enhanced conservation and management of EEZ fisheries.
- (3) Improved post-harvest fish management and marketing.
- (4) Safety-at-sea.
- (5) Strengthening the economic role of national fisheries industries and the privatization of fisheries investments.
- (6) Aquaculture and inland fisheries conservation, management and development.

The Programme will be used as a vehicle to assist SIDS under the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries which comprehensively covers the conservation, management and development of all fisheries, laying out principles and standards for establishing responsible fisheries sectors.

4. The Third Meeting of the South West Pacific Ministers of Agriculture held in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 26-27 April 1999 identified the following areas in fisheries to be improved (Annex I).

- Implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries at national and regional level.
- Collection, dissemination and analysis of fishery statistical data.
- Improve the safety and quality of fishery products.
- Train in appropriate technology required for various aspects of small-scale fisheries.

- Promote value-adding in processing.
5. Two regional workshops have been postponed. The workshop dates will be confirmed as soon as re-scheduled.
- South Pacific Regional Workshop on Fishery Statistics, scheduled in August 1999, has been postponed (Annex II).
  - Regional Workshop on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in the South Pacific, scheduled in Fiji in December 1999 in collaboration with the Forum Secretariat and the Forum Fisheries Agency, has been postponed until after mid-2000.

6. Technical assistance to the members is provided. Recent projects have included a strengthening of fisheries management in Fiji, Solomon Islands, PNG and Vanuatu, a fisheries sector study in Tonga, a regional initiative in the area of seafood quality control etc. through FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) and TeleFood Special Fund (TSF). Past and current projects are listed below.

**TCPs:**

- Fiji - (1996) Strengthening management capability in the Fisheries Division (Phase II) (US\$50,000)
- PNG - (1996-97) Strengthening national capacity for fisheries conservation and management (\$94,000)  
- (1997) Sustainable development of national fisheries and support of food security (\$283,000)
- Solomon - (1995-96) Strengthening national fisheries capacity (\$81,000)
- Tonga - (1997-98) Fisheries sector study (\$248,000)
- Vanuatu - (1996-97) Strengthening of national fishery policy (\$145,000)
- Region - (1997) Assistance to South Pacific to meet new fish regulations (\$165,000)  
- (1998) Uruguay Round Agreement on agriculture: present and future implications for agriculture and fisheries in the region (\$125,000)

**TSFs:**

- Tonga - (1998) Improved drying of fish facility (\$7,500)
- Samoa - (1998) Lagoon giant clam nursery development in Fusi Safata Village on Upolu Island, Samoa (\$9,105)  
- (1998) Lagoon giant clam nursery development in Satoalepai Village on Savaii Island, Samoa (\$5,925)
- Solomon - (1998) Kia Village Fishing Project, Santa Isabel, Solomon Islands (\$5,300)
- Cook - (1999) Fish Aggregate Device assistance (\$1,666)

**Others:**

- PNG - (1996-98) Special Programme on food production in support of Food Security in PNG (including inland aquaculture development) (\$744,730)
- Tonga - (1998) Second In-Country HACCP Training Workshop in Va'vau, Tonga.
- Region - (1994-99) South Pacific Aquaculture Development Project (Phase II) (\$4,170,000)  
- (1998) Regional workshop on economic strengthening of fisheries industries in Small Island Developing States in the South Pacific in Apia, 14-18/9/98  
- (1999) Round table meeting on implications of WTO agreements for the Pacific region, 22-26/3/99

**Third Meeting of South West Pacific Ministers of Agriculture**  
**Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 26-27 April 1999**

**Communiqué**

Agriculture Ministers from the South West Pacific region (Cook Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu) and Representatives from Australia and Fiji, met at the Queen Salote Memorial Hall, Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 26-27 April 1999. The purpose of the meeting was to advance agricultural policy development and give guidance on the further elaboration of a programme of work on issues identified at the Second Meeting on 23-24 June 1997.

The meeting was opened by Her Majesty Queen Halaevalu Mata'aho, Queen Regent. Honourable Baron Vaea was unanimously elected as Chairperson.

Ministers reconfirmed the declaration of the FAO Special Ministerial Conference on Agriculture in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) held in Rome in March 1999. Ministers reaffirmed the need for concrete action in areas identified in 1997 and noted progress achieved in several areas. Actions related to the 1997 Communiqué were reviewed. It was noted that since the last meeting the FAO Sub-regional office in Apia has been strengthened by the arrival of new staff and has been of great assistance to the region.

Efforts made by FAO to increase regional cooperation for the benefit of member countries and to work with other regional organizations to minimize duplication and optimize the sustainable use of countries' limited resources were appreciated.

Ministers noted that the priorities and activities under discussion would be instrumental for and consistent with the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action and acknowledged the role of women in pursuing these objectives. Ministers identified opportunities where increased cooperation was likely to produce mutual benefits. These included:

Agriculture policy

The Ministers recognized the importance of a well defined, coherent and achievable agriculture policy contributing to the long-term prosperity and growth of the Pacific Island economies. They emphasized that the national agriculture policy should take into account the efforts of the private sector, non-governmental organisations, government ministries and regional and international organisations toward integrating agriculture production, diversification and food security.

- Specifically Ministers directed that policies should be reviewed, strengthened and developed in the following areas:
- Policy reforms to promote investment in agriculture and to increase productivity, crop diversification and food security.
- Develop appropriate policy strategies that encourage the private sector to take the lead in agriculture investment and market development.
- Develop national food security policies to ensure adequacy, accessibility and stability of supplies for the population.
- Strengthen national and regional institutional capabilities to allow Pacific Island countries to take full advantage of new market opportunities.
- Strengthen national capabilities in data collection and analysis to provide updated and reliable statistics particularly in food production, consumption and food security.
- Strengthen the participatory decision making process which takes into account the greater involvement of women.

**Trade in Agriculture and Fisheries**

Ministers recognized the importance of trade, open markets and fair competition to the future development of their agriculture and fisheries production and exports. Ministers noted the efforts within the region to cope with the complex issues linked with trade liberalization and trade promotion and welcomed the improvement in understanding of the implications of the WTO agreements. They agreed on the importance of adapting national policies to align with the evolving trade environment and the need to further develop national capacity building in this area. In view of next round of WTO negotiations, Ministers recognized the need for PICs to consider their interests and negotiating positions with regard to the possible inclusion of the fishery sector in the negotiation. Ministers stressed the importance of including the following in the work programme:

- Provide updated information on the status of the negotiations and facilitate the policy coordination both at national and regional level.

Ministers recognized the need to comply with the requirements of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement, to further improve the quality and safety of agriculture and fishery products and to further improve the reputation of Pacific Island exports. Ministers identified a range of issues warranting attention, including :

- Revise, update and/or establish appropriate of legislation related to food, animal, fish and plant, and harmonization of national standards with international standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the International Plant Protection Convention and the International Office of Epizootics, and other international setting standards organizations;
- Training in appropriate inspection techniques and effective quality assurance systems for both the private and public sector.

In order to strengthen national and local capacity for enhancing the agriculture and fishery industries and for opening up new trade opportunities, Ministers agreed that action is required to:

- Promote value-adding in processing.
- Transfer appropriate technology required for various aspects of horticulture and small-scale fisheries.

In the desire to minimize the negative effects of pesticides and enhance the safety of agriculture products, Ministers recognized the importance of the following:

- Promote the use of bio-pesticides and other non chemical means such as biological control.
- Conduct regional round tables between pesticide registrars, pesticide suppliers and users to reach agreements on measures related to pesticide labelling, packaging, disposal and monitoring.

Ministers recognized the importance of sound management and sustainable use of fisheries resources as well as policy making and planning. Ministers agreed that action is required on the following:

- Improve collection, dissemination and analysis of fishery statistical data.
- Adhere, ratify and implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries at national and regional level.
- Strengthen international collaboration in continued negotiation of MHLIC (Multi-lateral High Level Conference on Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific).

### **Intensified and Diversified Sustainable Agriculture**

Ministers stressed the importance of improving agricultural marketing and the move towards diversified and sustainable market-oriented farming systems, both for domestic and export markets. More specifically, Ministers:

- Highlighted the role of improved extension and market information, and the need to support farmer decision making through improved capacity building in farm planning, farm management, enterprise development and monitoring, to enable men and women farmers to take advantage of future opportunities.
- Stressed the need for Governments and the private sector to work together to bring about necessary improvements in market relevant infrastructure and other areas; the importance they attached to resolving the outstanding SPS issues and urged that individual national efforts be supported by a strong spearhead initiative on a regional basis.
- Took note of the recommendations of the recent FAO workshop on agricultural marketing in PICs held in Apia, Samoa and requested FAO to ensure that the implementations of these recommendations be followed up at both regional and national levels.

Ministers welcomed participation by Niue in the meeting and supported its application to FAO membership.

Ministers agreed that this Third meeting had been constructive and useful. Ministers agreed that the next meeting would be convened and held in Vanuatu, during 2001.

1. Honourable Baron Vaea (Tonga): .....
2. Honourable Vaine Tairea (Cook Islands): .....
3. Honourable David Carter (New Zealand): .....
4. Honourable Tukape Masani (Papua New Guinea) .....
5. Honourable Masafolia Papu Vaai (Samoa): .....
6. Honourable Dr Steve S Aumanu (Solomon Islands): .....
7. Honourable John M Willie (Vanuatu): .....
8. HE Mr Andrew Mullin (Australia): .....
9. Mr Samisoni Ulitu (Fiji): .....

Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 27 April, 1999

**SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP**  
**ON FISHERY STATISTICS**

At the Third Meeting of the South West Pacific Ministers of Agriculture held in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, in April 1999, the status of fishery statistics in the South Pacific was identified as one of areas to be further improved. The importance of timely and accurate statistics as a basis for formulating strategies for sound management and sustainable use of fisheries resources as well as policy making and planning was recognized. Due to the need to review the current status of fishery statistics in the South Pacific region, FAO is planning to organize a regional workshop on fishery statistics.

**OUTLINES**

- 1. Period:** Two days  
**2. Date:** <tba>  
**3. Venue:** <tba>

- 4. Participants:** Heads of Fisheries/Senior Fisheries Officers of the FAO member and non-member countries in the Pacific, representatives of international, regional and bi-lateral organizations and NGOs

**5. Provisional agenda:**

- Opening of Meeting
- Election of Chair
- Adoption of Agenda
- Arrangements for Meeting
- Current status of fishery and aquaculture statistics
  - Country statements
  - Statements by regional, international and non-governmental organizations, bi-lateral agencies etc.
- Improvement on the collection, compilation and dissemination of fishery and aquaculture statistics
- Strengthening of the regional cooperation refers to utilizing sound, harmonized methods for data collection throughout the region
- Other matters
- Adoption of Report
- Close of Meeting