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SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

TWENTY FIRST REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 7-11 August 1989)

COUNTRY STATEMENT

FIJI

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**COUNTRY STATEMENT - FIJI**

1. This statement comprises the developments in the Fiji Fisheries Sector during 1988.

2. Industrial Fisheries:

2.1 The local tuna catch increased by 47% to 9175 tonnes due both to good performance from IKA Corporation and increased activity from licenced foreign longliners. The PAFCO tuna cannery at Levuka increased its throughput yet again [to 15825 tonnes] and sold a record F\$46.6 worth of canned fish mainly to the export market. An increase in the local market was also seen which measured 48,000 cartons valued at \$1.4 million.

2.2 The deepwater snapper industry [producing high quality chilled fish for the US market] continued to develop and many vessels that were fishing for deepwater snapper are currently beginning to consider surface longlining for yellowfin and bigeye. This is a welcome move because of the fear this limited snapper resource would become overexploited.

Fisheries Division is also in the process of formulating licencing measures to control what threatens to be overcapitalisation in the oceanic, chilled-market fishery.

3. Artisanal Fisheries:

During the 1988 period small-scale commercial [artisanal] fisheries production increased by 3.0% to 6868 tonnes and the value increased by 12.5% to approximately \$14.9 million. Increase in both fish and non-fish production were recorded.

This sector is an increasingly diverse one, ranging from village fisherwomen collecting shellfish in rivers to vessels fishing offshore for deepwater snappers for export.

Production from the sector is by some 6659 licenced and registered fishermen utilising 310 launches, 496 half cabin, 748 outboard punts and 373 punts.

4. Fisheries Division:

The 3 main operational units of the division are the Administration, Technical and Extension and Resource Assessment and Development sections. At the end of 1988 107 of the 117 established posts were occupied, 10 in Administration, 81 in Technical Service and Extension and 26 in Resource Assessment and Development.

7 US Peace Corps Volunteer postings were attached to the division during 1988, mainly to help the Rural Aquaculture Programme and 1 Japanese Volunteer was attached as a Fisheries Statiscian.

- 4.1 EXTENSION : The section continued to provide the link between the Fisheries Division and the fishermen. As well as their role in mediation, and the transfer of technology to fishermen, the 40 staff [spread over 14 stations] were fully involved in licencing and regulating activities, ice and gear sales, loan processing, fish processing, advisory services and lectures and practical demonstration to school and fishing groups.
- 4.2 TECHNICAL SERVICE : This unit continued to support both the Extension and the Resource Assessment and Development Sections in terms of providing technical advise and activities. The 41 staff includes those involved in boatbuilding, captains and crews of vessels, outboard and diesel engineering staff, Refrigeration mechanics, electricians, training officers, gear technologies, licencing, loan and processing officers. A brief on activities for the unit is as follows:-
- 4.2.1 BOATBUILDING : This programme did not progress as expected in 1988 due to escalating costs and the unavailability of the engines normally supplied under Japanese Aid. As a result a total of only 3, 9 metres vessels were constructed in 1988 which were sold to commercial fishermen. In addition one each 7 and 9 metre vessels were constructed for the rural development programmes.
- Work also progressed on maintenance of existing boats, and on follow-up programme.
- 4.2.2 FIJI DEVELOPMENT BANK LOAN ASSESSMENT : As at the end of 1988 317 loan applications were processed by the Fisheries staff. 235 were approved amounting to \$1,120,180. This was an increase in number and value over the 1987 period.
- 4.2.3 GEAR SALES : Fishing gear worth a total of \$53,240-60 were sold through the various offices and the activity operates on a revolving fund basis, and it is continued to be hampered by the limited size of the fund approved.
- 4.2.4 ICE PRODUCTION : As at the end of 1988 a total of 3699.2 tonnes of ice were produced which generated a revenue of \$216,000. This year it is expected that production will exceed 4,000 tonnes.
- 4.2.5 REGULATORY WORK : This includes;
- investigation of fish suspected of being caught by illegal means.
  - seizing of fish and crustaceans deemed undersized by the Fisheries Act.
  - confiscation of illegal fishing gear.
  - inspection of trochus exports prior to shipment.
  - issue of export permits.
  - collection of detailed catch records for export shipment of aquarium fish and ornamental corals.

4.2.6 FOOD PROCESSING UNIT : The Fisheries Division continued to provide assistance to rural communities in the processing of salted mullet and beche-de-mer through visits and on site instruction.

4.2.7 TRAINING : A fisherwoman course was held for a total of 16 participants under FAO/UNDP funding. In addition, a total of 158 fishermen benefitted from the rural fishermen training programmes held at various Provinces. These programmes are usually for a duration of one to two weeks, and the fishermen were taught the basics of deepsea fishing methods, outboard and diesel engineering courses, marketing, practical fishing, fish handling and icing, business management and the Fisheries Act.

4.3 RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT : The work is split over 5 main sub-sections. Mariculture, Aquaculture, Statistics and Information, Inshore and Environment and Marine Resources, and routine work of the section are as follows:

4.3.1 MARKET SURVEY : Municipal markets covering 12 major sites are surveyed for a minimum of 2 days per week coverage at each and supplemented by market master daily records. The section has an extremely important role in collecting data on fish production.

Other outlets which includes shops, hotels, restaurants, middlemen and roadside stalls are as surveyed.

4.3.2 MANGROVE RECLAMATION ASSESSMENT : Fisheries assessments of foreshore reclamations are routinely carried out and the division is charged with the responsibility for assessing the economic and biological value of marine resources in Crown Foreshore areas destined for reclamation. Tourism sector expansion has increased the volume of this work in recent years.

4.3.3 AQUACULTURE : The division maintains a freshwater aquaculture research station and hatchery at Naduruloulou, and some of the achievement by the unit are as follows:-

MACROBRACHIUM CULTURE: Hatchery production of 90,000 post larvae were achieved and used for poly-culture trials with tilapia and grass carp.

TILAPIA: The division is assisting in the commercial development of two Red Tilapia farms and also supports a hatchery for *Oreochromis nilotica*. The section also handles the numerous requests from coastal areas for assistance in setting up farms. An extension of this programme is the Rural Aquaculture Programme which aims at developing farming techniques in inland communities that do not have access to regular supplies of reef fish. A large part of the manpower is supplied by the US Peace Corps with 5 volunteers in place in 1989 and operationally funded by the Fisheries Division. 27 rural aquaculture farms were in production in 1988 producing 2.5 tonnes of fish.

GRASS CARP: Weed control programmes by the use of grass carps in rivers continue to be achieving success. During 1988 a total of 55,600 fingerlings were released, and rivers infested with water hyacinth were stocked.

4.3.4 FAD DEPLOYMENT : The Division has set many FAD's over the years giving great benefits to fishermen. New technology and increasing skills have improved effectiveness. IKA Corporation and IMR have provided assistance in the deployment of FAD's.

4.3.5 GIANT CLAM PROJECT : The ACIAR funded regional Giant Clam Project started in 1984 is now going into its second phase of hatchery development, the first phase of the project undertook a massive field survey of giant clams in Fiji Waters. As well as stock assessment which led to legislation banning the export of giant clam meat from Fiji, the survey discovered what may be a new Tridacna species. Work is planned for developing hatchery techniques and instituting an extension programme with the aim of limited reseeded of overexploited reefs.

4.3.6 SEAWEED : The industry made a nosedive in 1988 due to various reasons. However, new markets have been found and a new growing company is due to start operations soon.

4.3.7 INFORMATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES : A wide range of books, periodicals and publications on relevant topics were made available to Fisheries staff, USP students and interested people.

Monthly bulletins [Qitawa], research reports, radio broadcasts [in 3 languages - English, Hindi and Fijian], newspaper supplements and displays were produced to enhance public awareness.

4.3.8 INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES : Regular contacts is maintained with all regional fishing organisations including SPC, FFA, SPEC, ICOD and the FAO/UNDP regional fisheries programme.

This year the Fisheries Division co-hosted 3 important meetings in Suva with SPC and FFA.

This includes the SPAR [South Pacific Albacore Research Workshop], SCTB [Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish] and also the Third Albacore Consultation on the Southern Albacore Driftnet Fishing.

4.4 ADMINISTRATION : The most important unit of the division is the Administration unit which oversees that programmes under various sections are planned and effectively executed. It's the main link to the Ministry of Primary Industries on policy matters, budgets, staffing requirements, foreign relations and also liases with other Government Ministries on fisheries issues.

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