

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

## **SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION**

### **TWENTY-SECOND REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES** (Noumea, New Caledonia, 6-10 August 1990)

#### **EDUCATION RESOURCE MATERIALS AND TEACHING ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOLS**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

1. At previous Technical Meetings, either as part of its core activities or within the proposed work of the Fisheries Training Associate, the Regional Fisheries Training Project has been assigned the responsibility of producing fisheries educational materials for schools. Because of pressure of work and staff shortage (the Fisheries Training Associate has only recently been recruited), very little has been achieved, with activity limited to some basic research on what materials might be required. During this time, both the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the FAO/UNDP Regional Fishery Support Programme (RFSP) have also become interested in or involved with the production of training materials for schools within the region. There is general agreement that the production of such materials would provide helpful support to school systems and generate a greater general awareness of fisheries in the region. It is also obvious that the area which can be covered is very large, and that all concerned agencies might profitably be employed without any duplication of effort.

2. Several subject areas and various types of approach may be taken in this endeavor for which are also several possible target groups. This paper outlines some suggestions for the consideration of this meeting. In formulating these ideas, we have followed the example of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) which has been producing environmental resource materials for schools for some time with considerable success.

#### **Primary Schools**

3. An awareness of the marine environment, can be introduced to primary school children through the production of simple booklets for reading exercises, posters, coloring-in books, games and puzzles etc., which incorporate marine themes relevant to the Pacific situation. Most primary schools around the region would welcome additional, well produced materials to present to their classes. The sponsorship of fisheries theme poster competitions for both primary and secondary students also warrant consideration.

## **Secondary Schools**

4. Secondary Schools broadly fall into two types; those which are working towards School Certificate and University Entrance qualifications, and those which are technically or non-academically orientated.

5. It has been suggested in the past that as the School Certificate and University Entrance qualification levels adopted by many countries are those set by New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom, school authorities would be reluctant to include material which, although perhaps important and interesting, lies outside the syllabus, and consequently is not within the recommended reading list. The pressure on students to pass set examinations by studying the recommended literature does not encourage the inclusion of additional non-examined materials. With the education department of several countries now moving away from New Zealand, Australian and British qualifications towards national standards, recent indications that such suitable material, if well researched and presented, could possibly be included as an item within the examination structure.

6. With non-academic secondary schools, this presents no problem and a range of interesting, practical and useful materials could be produced eg. textbooks on fisheries themes, slide productions and videos.

7. In both types of secondary school, during pre-School Certificate years, there is a place for the production of a 'School Project Package' which covers the fisheries of the region. This information and reference package would contain material to assist students to prepare school projects for social studies or English classes.

## **Assistance for Teachers**

8. Should school 'packages' of any complexity be produced some consideration should be given to the possibility of linking in short courses for teachers to provide basic instruction in the use of the various packages. SPREP routinely run teacher familiarisation courses to introduce new information packages as they have found this to be popular with teachers and effective in promoting the regular use of environmental education materials in the classroom.

## **The Fisheries Extension Officer as a teacher in rural schools**

9. The suggestion that the fisheries extension officer be used as a teacher of structured fisheries courses to rural secondary schools also has some merit. This is based on the premise that some fisheries extension officers have quite a bit of 'down time', during periods when weather or other factors restrict fishing activities. This time could usefully be applied to teaching a short course at the local school or college, possibly in conjunction with the agriculture teacher, which would include talks on the theory and practice of fisheries and fishing (the resource, the environment, harvesting and marketing) as well as incorporating practical fishing sessions with the students actually fishing and marketing their own catches.

10. If such a project was considered useful to member countries, it could possibly be included under the auspices of the existing SPC programme of extension officer training. This would involve the production of a teaching resource folio which would contain all of the necessary lecture material, student literature, slides and student exercises, and the organisation of a short workshop for interested extension officers to show them how to structure and effectively teach the course.

### **Awareness of Fisheries as a Career**

11. The Forum Fisheries Agency has undertaken to produce material which outlines the variety of job opportunities which exist within the fishing industry and which stress the importance of fisheries to the region. The broad intention of this is to improve the image of fisheries as a career and to encourage more motivated and qualified individuals to consider this employment avenue.

12. In considering these options it should be understood that all initiatives at school level should be implemented under the auspices of and in cooperation with the responsible authorities, i.e. the various departments of education and the teachers themselves, who understand the school systems and know how to teach children and young adults.

### **Action Required**

13. The meeting is

- i) invited to consider the activity options outlined;*
  - ii) define priority areas for secretariat attention; and*
  - iii) advise as appropriate on a coordinated approach between the interested organisations.*
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