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ORIGINAL: FRENCH

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

TWENTY-SIXTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 5 - 9 August 1996)

COUNTRY STATEMENT

FRENCH POLYNESIA

1. Trends

An initiative launched in 1991 has targeted modernisation of production methods and implementation of activities in such basic areas as the Fishing Port and marketing.

- Overall policy is based on the following aims:
- increasing production through a Territorial programme covering 25-metre multipurpose tuna boats, encouragement of new private-sector investments and financial aid for modernisation of the artisanal fishing fleet;
- developing and adapting port infrastructures, e.g. fuelling, processing and marketing, both in Papeete, by improvements to the Papeete Fishing Port, and on the outer islands (Windward Islands, the Marquesas);
- promoting about better scientific knowledge of French Polynesia's exclusive economic zone;
- providing training in new fisheries trades by expanding the activities of the *Ecole de formation et d'apprentissage maritime* (Maritime Skills Training Institute);
- taking greater advantage of both the law on non-taxable capital investments and revenue from access agreements in order to fund development in this sector;
- targeting export goals, while meeting demand on the local market.

2. Production

2.1 Offshore (long-range) fisheries

2.1.1 Currently the only foreign vessels fishing in French Polynesia's EEZ are Korean, as Japan has broken off negotiations since 1992. These ships' catches are not marketed locally, but are transhipped to large-capacity transport vessels.

2.1.2 French Polynesian fleet

This fleet comprises 43 vessels (multipurpose tuna boats and longliners). Commercial production is approximately 2000 mt per annum and mainly consists of tuna (65%) and billfish (25%).

2.2 Nearshore (short-range) fisheries

2.2.1 Skipjack-longliners

Due to developments in fishing techniques, some skipjack boats involved in surface fishing have been modified and equipped with longlines, bringing the total number of vessels in this fleet to 30.

In 1995, catches reached 248 mt, including 149 mt of tuna (60%) and 70 mt of billfish (28%).

About 100 skipjack boats take part in this type of fishing. Locally-marketed catches vary between 1000 and 1500 mt per annum and are essentially comprised of skipjack (80%), tuna and mahi mahi (dolphinfish).

2.2.2 "Poti marara" (specially-designed boats for netting flying fish)

This involves about 200 boats. They generally fish less than 20 nautical miles from the coast for tuna or mahi mahi during the day and for flying fish at night.

Catches are estimated at about 300 mt per annum, most of which is sold on the local market.

2.3 Lagoon fishing

Lagoon fishing is principally found in the Tuamotu Islands, where the main fishing technique used is fish traps. Total lagoon fish production is estimated at 4000 mt per annum. Catches are mainly used for food, with the excess sold on the local market (1000 mt).

2.4 Shellfish

Trochus and green snail fishing is regulated by local authorities and provides an important supplemental resource for the communities involved.

YEAR	TROCHUS Quantity harvested (kg)	GREEN SNAILS Quantity harvested (kg)
1990	97,344	
1991	35,548	
1992	82,063	
1993	87,000	57,476
1994	27,455	
1995		43,356
TOTAL	329,410	100,832

3. Development

3.1 Fiscal incentives

3.1.1 Exemptions

In 1994, commercial fishermen benefited from exemptions totaling 165 million CFP francs, i.e. 96 million for longliners, 31 million for tuna vessels, 18.7 million for skipjack boats, 16.7 million for "poti marara" and 3.2 million for other types of vessels.

Those items benefiting from exemptions were, in descending order of importance, fishing boats, boat motors, fishing rods and hooks.

3.1.2 Aid for fuel purchases

In 1994 the Territory granted maritime professionals some 55.1 million CFP francs in aid for fuel purchases, i.e. 54 million for skipjack boats and 1,100,000 CFP francs for "poti marara".

3.2 Revenue from access agreements with South Korea

In 1994, the Technical Committee in charge of attributing development aid for maritime activities from revenue generated by access agreements allocated these proceeds (150 million CFP francs) to the following areas: longliner equipment, diesel motors for "poti marara", development of port infrastructures, refrigerated container equipment, improvements to the Papeete Fishing Port, mooring fish aggregation devices, and computer equipment to monitor Argos buoys.

3.3 Research

In order to better understand resources in the EEZ, the Development Contract between the French Government and Territorial authorities funded a survey of sea mounts and reef slopes. In addition, purchase of a database designed to receive maps of ocean surface temperatures which can then be transmitted to fishermen is currently under consideration.

3.4 Training

In the area of maritime training and apprenticeship, the Marine Skills Training Institute has continued to modernise through the purchase of new teaching materials (e.g. in mechanics, refrigeration, electricity).

New fisheries training sections have also been created. These study programmes lead to various levels of training, e.g. a fishing vessel pilot's certificate, skipper's licence, offshore skipper's licence, distant waters captain's licence.

3.5 Marketing

The construction of a wholesale market in Tahiti (independent storage facility and fish trade stands) is now being funded.

Decentralised processing centres are being set up in the outer islands, particularly the Windward Islands.

4. Objectives

Catches from the domestic offshore fishing fleet are primarily destined for export. Several applied research and fisheries trades training programmes are devoted to this area of economic development, which shows a great potential (33,000 mt).

As for lagoon fishing, optimum management and protection of the lagoon are the principal tools available for development, so formulation of management plans for maritime areas is a priority issue.
