

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 16-19 November 2004)**DIVISIONAL PRESENTATION : MARINE RESOURCES**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide a broad update on the work of the Marine Resources Division. In particular, to provide an overview of progress towards the strategic objectives of the three programmes within the Division, to provide a series of short policy briefs on issues arising within the sector, and to present appropriate outputs of recent SPC sectoral meetings. For more detailed information, representatives are referred to the reports presented to the recent SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting¹ (HoF), the Pacific Maritime Association (PacMA), the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB), and previous CRGA papers.

1. DIVISIONAL OVERVIEW

2. To briefly summarise for the benefit of those delegates unfamiliar with SPC, the Marine Resources Division is one of the three divisions of the SPC Work Programme. It is composed of two Fisheries Programmes, Oceanic and Coastal, based in Nouméa, and has had a conceptual linkage since 1997 to the Regional Maritime Programme, based in Suva. The rôle of the constituent programmes is explained in more detail in the 2003-5 strategic plans that were presented at CRGA32² but, briefly, the intention of the Marine Resources Division as a whole is to support and guide its constituent programmes in achieving the regionally-shared vision expressed in the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy of "*A healthy ocean that sustains the livelihoods and aspirations of Pacific Island communities*". This broad regional vision now encompasses the ocean activities of all the CROP³ agencies collaborating through the CROP Marine Sector Working Group⁴.

¹ <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF4/index.html>

² also available at <http://www.spc.int/mrd/org/org.html>

³ CROP is the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific, chaired by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

⁴ see <http://www.piocean.org>

1.1 Regional Maritime Programme

3. The Regional Maritime Programme (RMP) provides legal and HRD advice to help SPC members to reduce ship-borne marine pollution, to adhere to International Shipping and Port Security requirements and to improve national maritime safety and training standards to internationally-required levels, which also helps maintain international job opportunities for Pacific Island seafarers – a significant factor in the economies of several members. In general, the main part of the work of the RMP is to assist SPC island member governments to achieve standards agreed by them through the International Maritime Organization, and to thus maintain the lifeblood of Pacific Islands trade. The SPC member sectoral contacts for the RMP are primarily with Marine departments, central legal offices and Maritime training institutions, and the technical work of the programme is guided by the annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA) of which the SPC Maritime Programme is the Secretariat. Having helped many SPC members achieve international maritime "White List" status, the work of the programme has increasingly focussed on helping existing white-list members to develop the capacity to maintain this international status, through the development of national training institutions and regional networks promoting mutual assistance, and a particularly urgent new item on the agenda of the RMP is promoting compliance with new international port security measures.

The Strategic Programme Plan 2003-2005 of the Regional Maritime Programme was a paper to CRGA32 and approved at that meeting in November 2002. A report on progress against the objectives of the strategic plan so far in 2004 is summarised as Annex 5.

1.2 Oceanic Fisheries Programme

4. The Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) provides a scientific advisory service to SPC members on the status of highly-migratory marine species, primarily the tuna stocks and the pelagic ecosystems that support the major offshore fisheries operating in the region. The applied scientific work of the OFP complements the regional economic, legal, tuna management planning, and surveillance etc. specialisations of the Forum Fisheries Agency and the new Western and Central Pacific Highly Migratory Fish Stocks Commission⁵ to provide balanced regional support services to Pacific Islands in tuna fisheries policy planning and negotiation. The OFP also complements the small-scale tuna fisheries development work of the Coastal Fisheries Programme, as well as providing an internationally-recognised benchmark of the status of tuna fisheries and associated species of value in international processes. The SPC member government sectoral contacts for the OFP are primarily with Fisheries services, but sectoral advice is also provided to SPC official contacts who are directly involved in tuna fishery negotiations, as required.

⁵ Which holds its first meeting in December in Pohnpei – see www.ocean-affairs.com

5. The Strategic Programme Plan 2003-5 of the OFP was a paper to CRGA32 and approved at that meeting in November 2002. The 2004 work plan to implement the second year of the strategic plan, together with a report on progress in the first 6 months of 2004 is available on the HoF4 web-page, and will be included as Annex 7. It may be noted that an independent review of the Oceanic Component of the PROCFISH project is currently under way, and there is ongoing close examination of the work, and the role, of the OFP in relation both to the FFA strategic planning process and the discussions under the new Tuna Commission, particularly its Scientific Committee.

1.3 Coastal Fisheries Programme

6. The Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP) provides a broad range of services to assist Pacific Island governments in the establishment of sustainable locally-based fishing enterprises, in understanding and planning inshore fisheries, and in promoting appropriate coastal fishery and aquaculture governance mechanisms. The SPC member government sectoral contacts for the CFP are primarily with Fisheries services. The work of both the OFP and the CFP is discussed by member countries at Heads of Fisheries (HoF) meetings, whose recommendations, and other feedback, guide the secretariat in producing the detailed work-programme of each section within the overall corporate policy framework overseen by CRGA and Conference. Both programmes are additionally guided by subsectoral committees and specialist working groups convened by SPC, and also take account of regional directions indicated by the Forum Fisheries Committee, the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish, and the regional processes being established under the new international management regime for Western and Central Pacific tuna fisheries.

The Strategic Programme Plan 2003-5 of the CFP was a paper to CRGA32 and approved at that meeting in November 2002. The 2004 work plan to implement the first year of the strategic plan, together with a report on progress in the first 6 months of 2004 is available on the HoF4 web-page, and will be inserted in this paper as Annex 6.

1.4 Associated Programmes

7. SPC is also hosting a WorldFish applied research project on the rehabilitation of bêche-de-mer stocks. The administration costs are fully funded. The project is not included in the Divisional overview because, although its aims are fully complementary to SPC work, it is governed under the Worldfish corporate plan. The project will become independent of SPC once Worldfish establishes a permanent office in New Caledonia.
8. SPC headquarters has also been asked to host a French Government funded Coral Reef programme (CRISP) which, like the Worldfish office, will also be fully funded with respect to administration and office costs and will operate independently of SPC Strategic Programme Plans.

1.5 Staff

9. The executive management component of the Division, outside its constituent programmes, consists of two staff: a Director, and a Secretary who also provides a supplementary service to the rest of the Nouméa-based Executive and Divisional programmes. The Division as a whole contains 38 internationally-recruited staff posts, plus 5 Pacific Island Associates, and 18 locally-recruited staff (of which 2 are field-based). By programme, the RMP has 5 staff posts, the OFP 27, and the CFP 22 (see **Annex 1**). Additionally, the associated WorldFish project on optimal strategies for restocking and stock enhancement of sandfish (*bêche-de-mer*) employs 2 professionals and 4 technical staff, and the French CRISP project will employ at least one professional, whilst the OFP and CFP fund, part-fund, or otherwise coordinate the outputs of several locally-based technical staff.
10. 34% of the professional staff of the Division at the time of writing are Pacific Island nationals – a steady increase over the last 5 years. In 2005, this percentage is likely to rise again to 41% of full-time professional staff (47% with the inclusion of attachments) after recruitment to new EU projects is completed. Pacific Island staff (including support staff) currently comprise 48% of the total staffing of the Division. This total Pacific Islander staffing ratio is likely to rise to 52% (56% including attachments) in 2005 – a significant benchmark for the Division.

1.6 Funding

11. As with most of SPC's member country client-oriented activities, the work of the Division is funded primarily from non-core financial sources. Member country assessed (core) contributions provide the costs of one staff member in each of the three constituent programmes, plus the executive management of the Division, and in total contribute about 9% of the direct funding of the Division. The Division also has access to SPC common support services in the Corporate Services Division and the Information and Communications Programme of the Social Resources Division, and in 2003-4 the Division also has had dedicated access to one professional translator temporarily core-funded under the Programme Management Fee and managed by the SPC Translation and Interpretation Section.
12. The planned total budget of the Division in 2005 is approximately 7,348,000 CFP units, made up as follows (see CRGA budget documents for details):

cfp units	2002 total	2003 total	2004 total	2005 total	% core (2005)
Oceanic Fisheries	3,210,000	3,178,000	2,275,000	2,855,000	4.5%
Coastal Fisheries	2,750,000	3,114,000	4,045,000	3,518,000	4.3%
Maritime	1,200,000	1,350,000	1,434,000	727,000	16.8%
Divisional Direction	300,000	297,000	312,000	248,000	100.0%
Total**	7,500,000	7,941,000	8,066,000	7,348,000	8.8%

* figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000 CFP units. ** There may be rounding errors in summary totals

1.7 Highlights

13. The outputs of the Marine Resources Division are regularly reported to funding clients by the individual projects or programmes, and to member country clients both individually during each national sub-project and collectively during the sectoral meetings involving each of the Division's constituent programmes.
14. The following table briefly summarises the most notable or newsworthy (in the view of each section leader) output of each section in the Divisional work-programme in 2004

Marine Resources Division highlights – 2004 (note: this by no means constitutes the entire output of work-programmes – just a single memorable output from each section)	
Directors Office	Production, in collaboration with FFA, of a strategic overview of the fisheries sector for the Forum's Pacific Plan preparation process ⁶ .
Regional Maritime Programme	
Maritime Training and Information	Sea safety information translated into 8 languages and distributed to PICTs with dissemination of up-to-date international and regional maritime information.
Secretariat Functions	RMP provides secretariat services to the Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA), the Pacific Women in Maritime Association (WIMA) and is currently engaged in talks with the Association of Pacific Ports (APP)
Maritime Legislation	Maritime Law Seminars and the Legal Internship Programme enable maritime lawyers from the region to gain knowledge and experience on topical legal issues.
Oceanic Fisheries Programme	
Statistics & Monitoring	Enhanced technical support provided for port sampling and observer programmes in member countries as Pacific Island domestic tuna fishery development continues.
Stock Assessment and Modelling	Compilation of National Tuna Fishery Status Reports (NTFSRs) providing information to assess the status of tuna resources for individual member countries. In 2004, NTFSRs were completed for Tonga, Samoa and Marshall Islands and additional analyses were completed for other member countries
Biology and Ecology	External funding for operational and strategic research projects investigating the dynamics of tuna populations and the ecosystems that support them. This research aims to provide a better understanding of the resource and to continually improve the quality of management advice to SPC members.
Coastal Fisheries Programme	
Aquaculture development:	Workshops with veterinarian, quarantine, environment and fisheries government departments held in four Pacific Island countries to assess regional needs for aquatic animal health and quarantine.

⁶ <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/reports/hof4/doc/E-BP6-HOF4.doc>

Fisheries development:	Successful trials of longline bycatch reduction and tuna catch enhancement technologies in addition to routine hands-on assistance to Pacific Islands longline tuna fishing enterprises.
Coastal Fisheries Management:	Progressive implementation at the national level of Regional Strategies for Coastal Fisheries Management, including the launch of a major new Commonwealth Secretariat-funded implementation component.
Fisheries training:	Wide distribution (fisheries administrations, training institutions, private sector) of a package of awareness and training materials on the bycatch issue in the tuna longline fishery, was a special focus within the ongoing training programme for Pacific Island fisheries and fishing individuals.
Fisheries information:	Initiation of a regional fisheries information initiative, with the aim of focussing support and collaboration to move fisheries information networking to a new level
Reef fisheries observatory:	Expansion of reef fishery survey project to include 6 new member countries, to enhance ongoing reef survey work beyond the current 11 countries and territories.

2. MAJOR ISSUES IN THE REGIONAL “FISH AND SHIPS” SECTOR DURING 2004

15. Some of these issues are mentioned in other parts of this paper, but are gathered together here for reference and possible discussion as a set of “mini-policy briefs”. This is by no means a full and prioritised list of issues, but draws the attention of CRGA to matters which may need further thought, or action.

ISPS

16. The International Ships and Port Facility Security measures introduced by the International Community, primarily to protect countries vulnerable to terrorism from attacks via the medium of internationally-mobile vessels, has introduced another major burden on Pacific Island maritime authorities and governments, as well as shipping companies themselves. The Regional Maritime Programme had assisted countries of the region towards a major achievement in developing local seafarer training institutions to “White List” status, but has found that far from being able to enter a period of consolidation and implementation of these standards, a further set of new standards has to be achieved if small island states are not to be disadvantaged.
17. This will require a further major effort by the RMP and by countries themselves. Apart from certain countries already impacted, which require special attention if maritime trade lifelines are to be maintained, there is a large extra effort required to bring international fishing vessels into the system, without unduly burdening domestic fishing vessels. SPC and FFA have been asked by the Forum to work together on this latter issue and a joint discussion paper on the issue was commissioned by the 4th Heads of Fisheries Meeting for submission to the next Forum security meeting. The RMP welcomes the support that has already been provided by the international community in helping to address some of the maritime security issues and the RMP and FFA would welcome further support to address any maritime security regulatory problems posed by internationally-mobile fishing vessels using Pacific Island ports, and in developing the linkage between fisheries MCS⁷ procedures (including existing foreign fishing vessel and VMS registers, and entry reporting systems) and national port security systems.

⁷ “Monitoring, Control and Surveillance”, also often referred to as “enforcement”.

WCP Highly Migratory Fish Stocks Commission

18. The new Commission is due to open its doors in December, and will provide an internationally-accepted management regime for the last major pelagic fishery in the world not yet under an international management regime. One advantage for the Pacific Islands is that the management area includes currently-unregulated high-seas areas as well as those parts of the waters of Indonesia and the Philippines that are part of the range of Pacific tuna fish stocks. Fishing in these areas has a significant impact on the overall status of the stock.
19. The irony of this also being the last major global fishery that still has significant remaining development capacity (at least with respect to skipjack tuna), despite not being subject to international management, has not been lost on some observers. However, this happy situation is probably as much due to the region's historical remoteness and the resulting lower profitability of fishing as anything else, and the inclusion of these new regions into the area over which Pacific Island states have management influence is a necessary step towards ensuring the long-term sustainability of tuna stocks and their supporting ecosystems.
20. Pacific Islands now have a major task ahead of them to ensure that they optimise their influence within the new Commission to ensure sustainability of the fishery, and that the generally more exploitative interests of distant-water fishers do not predominate as they have in some other fisheries Commissions. The Forum Fisheries Agency is currently reviewing its organisational strategy, with this task in mind. However, the fact that this is also the first major new regional fisheries management body to be set up since the coming-into-force of the UN Highly Migratory and Straddling Fish Stocks Agreement will also inherently promote the interests of sustainable management over the interests of short-term maximisation of exploitation.
21. The optimum Pacific Island national and regional strategies within the new commission, particularly strategies for domestic fisheries development, are subjects upon which every pundit currently has an opinion, including SPC. However, such a discussion is beyond the scope of this paper – it will have been discussed at the Forum Fisheries Committee in October⁸ and will be discussed again at the ministerial FFC in December – and several more direct, subsidiary issues are noted here for the attention of CRGA:
22. The role of OFP: this has been discussed at great length in previous years, and will not be dwelt upon here save to note that progress is according to plan, and the OFP can expect to emerge with incrementally-increasing user-pays support for tasks commissioned under the new regime – support that does not impact (and indeed is likely to considerably enhance) the traditional services that it provides to SPC island members, both individually and collectively.

⁸ Still to take place at the time of writing

23. The need for private sector stakeholder involvement: Given that the primary vehicle for the Pacific Islands to obtain economic benefit from regional tuna fisheries is the commercial sector, it is desirable for the commercial sector to have some voice in the proceedings of the Commission. In contrast to the heavy commercial representation within non-Pacific Island delegations to the previous MHLC and Prepcon meetings, Pacific Island delegations have consisted almost entirely of government representatives, with some notable exceptions. SPC member countries and territories may wish to consider mechanisms of providing private sector stakeholder input into the process, either by holding national stakeholder consultations before each commission meeting, or by including tuna industry representatives in their delegations to the commission. The University of the South Pacific has taken the initiative of holding a workshop for Pacific tuna industry operators in September this year, to build private sector awareness of the role of the new commission, and it is also possible that some form of regional coordination of industry involvement (e.g. a regional federation of Pacific Island national associations of tuna-vessel operators) may emerge⁹. Any developments in October will be reported verbally to CRGA.
24. The role of territories: Whilst the independent Pacific Island States (and recently Tokelau) have regularly met over the past 25 years within the Forum Fisheries Committee, the range of regional tuna stocks also includes the waters of French and US territory members of SPC. US territorial interests are harmonised through the US Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council, which has links with the rest of the Island region, but the new Commission is possibly the first major prospect for French territories to join a collective voice on the regional management of this fishery.
- SPC does not propose any particular course of action, but would point out the opportunity for dialogue and possibly a more collective approach between Pacific Island territories and States before the operation of the new Commission becomes formalised. SPC has also been asked by Pitcairn to assess prospects for fishery development, and this will also include strategies for maximising benefits through regional cooperation on tuna vessel licencing.
25. The “allocation mechanisms” to be developed: Possibly one of the most difficult tasks on the negotiation agenda of the new Commission, apart from setting the overall limits within which the overall sum of tuna fisheries in the region must be contained in order to avoid overfishing, will be to determine some mechanism for broadly deciding who is allowed to fish what, and where. Ideas have been gradually crystallising, and a major workshop was held in association with the Forum Fisheries Committee in October (in the future at the time of drafting this paper) to try and develop preferred options for FFA members.

⁹ It might be noted that the SPC component of the EU-funded DEVFISH project, implemented by the Fisheries Development Section, will have a specific focus on encouraging the development of appropriate national associations of domestic tuna fishery operators, but at the time of design of the project a regional association was not considered likely, based on the state of organisation of the sector at the time. Several committed individuals have made a major difference in a short space of time.

26. Taking account of bycatch and endangered species interactions: although bycatch issues, and endangered species interactions have recently become major drivers of pelagic fisheries management processes, negotiations towards the new Commission have concentrated almost exclusively on the 4 main target species of tuna. SPC members will need to develop policies and preferred positions on how to manage these interactions within commission processes, and this is outside the scope of SPC work. However, SPC is concerned that, whatever management mechanisms eventually emerge, the mechanisms to monitor and evaluate these interactions will need to be built into Commission processes from the start, in order to build up baseline information for future management actions. The Oceanic Fisheries Programme has existing infrastructure and networks to help develop these assessments, but needs further resources to actually carry out this work on bycatch to international standards since its resources are currently focussed on the 4 target species, and in building an understanding of the overall ecosystem.

Domestication of tuna fisheries

27. Although the word “domestication” has other connotations in the English language, within the context of the Pacific Island fisheries sector it has become a useful label for the move by Pacific Islands to earn foreign exchange increasingly from domestically-based fishing enterprises rather than simply selling access or resources to outside interests. For some countries, the extraction of “rent” will remain an efficient economic vehicle for the utilisation of a large component of their fishery resources, but even the smallest island states are able to provide at least some prospect for their citizens to develop their own fisheries or domestic processing facilities, and the overall economic benefits of domestically-based industry can be considerably greater, in terms of employment, and the provision of associated services, than simply selling licences to foreign fleets.
28. As Pacific Island states have discovered, following the requirement for licenced vessels to tranship in port rather than at sea, and from the rapid development of domestically-based fishing in some countries, domestication can have unexpected drawbacks. Some of the services that the fishing industry requires can lead to rapid social change, and the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases, and too-rapid investment on the crest of a pelagic fishery recruitment cycle, or based on virgin fishery catch-rates, is often followed by bankruptcies as the cycle turns, or as local draw-downs of stocks occur. Real or perceived interactions between new industrial fisheries and established artisanal and recreational pelagic fisheries are also a headache for national fishery managers.
29. Nonetheless, Pacific Island states are committed to maximising economic benefits from the regional tuna resource, and have learned many lessons over the past two decades. SPC provides both a forum for sharing those lessons, and for assessing the impacts of domestication, as well as assisting countries and territories to develop realistic and sustainable fishery development policies. This work is carried out in concert with FFA and others, and covers not just tuna fishery development, but aquaculture and reef fisheries. The limits of fisheries are being approached in many corners of the world, and yet the small island states of the Pacific Islands region will remain highly dependent upon their main natural resources – marine resources – for the foreseeable future. The task of maximising economic benefit, whilst ensuring the sustainability of these resources is going to become more and more difficult as populations expand, and is not going to be quickly achieved.

30. Donor support will not last forever – already two major sources of assistance, in the form of Canadian and UK aid, have been withdrawn from the region – and the domestication of fisheries must go hand in hand with the domestication of fishery management and development capacity, and the introduction of domestic user-pays arrangements as fisheries become commercialised. Whilst full management cost-recovery from individual transferable quota or other commercial rights-based systems, such as the New Zealand system, are probably not appropriate to most Pacific Island fisheries at this phase of development, there is a need to start applying Pacific Island-specific fishery management systems that begin to take burdens off government and donors. Regional agencies are aiming to help governments and administrations strategically develop or operationalise such systems.

International fisheries issues

31. The attention of the international community, particularly the environmental community, is being increasingly drawn to the management of ocean use, and fisheries are one of the main users of ocean resources. Although these international issues are known to many CRGA delegates, and particularly well-known to Pacific Island delegations to the United Nations, they do not always filter through to domestic fisheries administrations. Yet these issues are likely to impact Pacific Island fisheries development activities with increasing frequency. The SPC Marine Resources Division endeavours to monitor the most important of these developments, and for the last two years a summary paper has been submitted to the HoF meeting¹⁰. Some of these issues are brought forward for CRGA attention:

Moves to address potential impacts of high seas trawling:

32. This particular issue has been building within the international community for a couple of years now – the subject of vigorous campaigns both by Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature, and is reaching the stage of proposals being made both in international meetings and regional fisheries commissions. As explained in the HoF4 paper (referenced in footnote 10), unlike moves to ban longlining, any measures to restrict trawling in high seas areas would not have a negative impact on the Pacific Islands, and indeed might be of positive benefit in ensuring that fragile resources in nearby high-seas areas (or even within EEZs, in the case of poachers) were not squandered by distant-water fishers before effective management is introduced, and Pacific Islands get to a stage of development to take advantage of a well-managed, low-volume but high-value fishery themselves.

¹⁰ <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/hof4/pdf/e-ip4-hof4.pdf>

Moves towards a global ban on longlining

33. There have been several petitions and resolutions by groups of “leading scientists” and others, that a global ban on longlining be declared, analogous to the moratorium on fishing with long driftnets¹¹. Although this appeared to be gathering momentum in 2003, in 2004 the effects of bycatch mitigation measures (particularly the greater use of line-shooters and the advent of side-setting techniques that set longline hooks well below the surface thus avoiding most seabird and turtle interactions) appear to have taken much of the steam out of this movement. However the Hawaiian longline fishery was severely impacted, and remains impacted by new concerns over marine mammal interactions (even, apparently, if such interactions consist simply of pilot or killer whales taking fish off hooks without injury to themselves). As noted in the paper to HoF, and at more length in a paper submitted by SPC to an international think-tank on Pacific turtle-fisheries interactions¹², any ban by the international community on longline fishing would have severe impacts on Pacific Island economies, whilst having little effect on the conservation of the species that it would be intended to protect, at least in the Pacific Islands region where the bycatch of seabirds is virtually nonexistent, where marine mammals are not hooked, where new mitigation measures have reduced turtle bycatch in some areas by 90%, and where the bycatch of oceanic sharks appears to be sustainable at current levels of fishing. It is suggested that CRGA delegates maintain a watching brief on this issue, particularly through their New York missions, and SPC stands by to assist develop further mitigation and awareness measures, and provide briefings.
34. Various possible mechanisms appear to be under consideration. One is a moratorium on trawling itself (either restricted to the high seas, but with some proposing international agreement for a total moratorium on industrial trawling within EEZs as well). Another is for the closure of high seas areas to all forms of exploitation (either all high seas, or just a certain percentage, with the high seas “enclaves” within the Pacific Islands region being particularly targeted). Another would be simply a ban (albeit probably unenforceable) on trawling on high-seas seamounts – which are the main target of protection because of their largely undiscovered, and probably highly endemic, biodiversity. Yet another would be to bring benthic fishing under the oversight of existing or new regional fisheries commissions, and to rapidly develop new precautionary management measures to regulate deep-sea trawling.
35. Although these different proposals would have different implications for those countries with existing trawl (especially high seas-capable trawl) fisheries, including some of the larger SPC members, there would be negligible impact of most of these proposals on SPC island members, almost all of which possess no trawl fisheries, and some of which have domestic policies which forbid the licencing of trawlers anyway. Any proposal to close high seas “enclaves” within the region to all forms of exploitation would have consequences that would need to be analysed, but could possibly be viewed as beneficial to the islands. This would have the effect of moving distant-water tuna fisheries out of these areas and to the high seas to the north and south of the region (if the new Commission permits), or to within EEZs. Whilst that might increase the fishing pressure within EEZs if not carefully managed, it would also increase potential licencing revenue (not necessarily by increasing fishing pressure, but by increasing competition for resource allocations).

¹¹ initiated in the Pacific Islands region through the “Tarawa Declaration” by the SPC Conference, activated by the 1989 Wellington Convention, and followed up globally by the United Nations in 1992.

¹² <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/hof4/pdf/e-BP13-hof4.pdf>

36. This issue is raised here because it does not appear to have yet been discussed at any other forum within the region, and it certainly bears discussion. CRGA 34 may not be the time nor the place, but it is also possible that the issue will be raised within the first meeting of the new Commission and we understand it has already been raised within the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. National and regional positions may need to be prepared in advance, and SPC stands ready to assist any discussion that eventuates, within the limits of our information and mandate.

Management of aquatic species translocation

37. The problems caused by the transport of disease-causing organisms or invasive and noxious species from country to country are well known in agriculture, and most Pacific Islands have had well-developed agricultural quarantine systems in place for decades. Problems can arise not only from the impact of diseases or noxious introduced species on domestic crops and ecosystems but also from the restrictions placed on Pacific Island agricultural exports by importing countries if a pest becomes established in an island agricultural system. Perhaps because we are surrounded by water, through which marine species move from country to country unhindered, restrictions on the introduction of aquatic species are less institutionalised, although this is probably more because aquaculture is less well-established than agriculture.
38. However, aquaculture is expanding, and different species with superior farming qualities, or to address a new market, are being introduced at an increasing rate. In 1986 SPC members agreed to a set of guidelines to assist national authorities in managing the international movement of giant clams for farming purposes, and in 1993 a set of guidelines for the quarantine of introduced aquatic organisms was agreed by CRGA. However, even though these regional guidelines were available, the institution of national systems for managing or quarantining aquatic species introductions was patchy and sporadic, perhaps because such movements were low in frequency in comparison to agriculture species. This is changing, and several countries now have established procedures in place.
39. This is just to note that SPC, in collaboration with Worldfish, ACIAR and others, has once more started to address aquatic introduction and quarantine issues at the regional level, under the Coastal Fisheries Programme's Aquaculture Section and the Agriculture Programme, in response to the emergence of this issue. A review has been undertaken (available through the aquaculture web-portal at www.spc.int/coastfish/sections/aquaculture) and will form the basis for developing a programme of capacity-building, resources permitting. SPC has commissioned Import Risk Analysis (IRAs) which incorporates both disease risks and pest risk for several proposed introductions by PICs which will contribute to a regional framework for future movements.

Coastal Fisheries and Land-based impacts

40. One issue which has been on the awareness-raising agenda of the Marine Resources Division for some time, but which was brought sharply into focus by the last Heads of Fisheries Meeting, is the need for Pacific Island coastal fisheries managers to acquire the capability to take into account impacts other than fishing on fisheries. As well as a need for monitoring fisheries themselves there is a growing gap in the availability of information about non-fisheries impacts on nearshore marine resources.

Pollution monitoring

41. The problems with fisheries departments getting involved in such issues as pollution monitoring are twofold. On the one hand it may appear to encroach upon the remit of other government departments, and possibly lead to conflict with such authorities as Ministries of Agriculture, and on the other hand it may be perceived by environmentalists as a means whereby fisheries departments can find excuses in order to absolve fishermen from blame for depressed fisheries.
42. The fact remains that water-quality is a major concern for fishery managers, and has definitely been the cause of many deleterious impacts on fisheries, from suspicions about the relation between ciguatera fish poisoning and pollution, through reef-siltation, to outright fish kills when heavy rain after a drought washes pesticides, fertiliser and soil into rivers and lagoons. It is a particular concern for the tourism industry, which relies heavily upon the reputation of the Pacific Islands for clear, unpolluted waters. It is also an issue for aquaculturalists, whose investments can be wiped out in a matter of days by poor-quality water¹³, and marketers of shellfish from waters polluted by sewage.

The Aquaculture Section is currently working on an assessment of the economic impact of the recent outbreak of blacklip pearl oyster disease in the Cook Islands, which might have been avoided with rigorous water quality monitoring. The results from preliminary analyses suggest potential losses of between NZ\$35 million and NZ\$100 million cumulative over the past four years.

43. It is however an issue which has tended to “fall between the cracks” between different ministries and regional agencies. Although there have been moves afoot to develop coastal-zone and whole-island management systems for decades, most of these have still to bear substantive fruit, and the needs of fisheries managers are urgent. This is to note that the 4th Heads of Fisheries meeting has asked the SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme to look into the possibility of assisting fisheries departments to effectively assess and address these impacts. We will both be seeking the integration of coastal fisheries management concerns into coastal zone and island management planning processes, as well as seeking ways of developing the capacity of fisheries departments themselves to undertake more monitoring of specific pollutants, with the assistance of development agencies as appropriate.

¹³ although this poor quality may also result from the effects of aquaculture itself, particularly overcrowding

Status of coral reefs

44. One spin-off from the intensive EU-funded work that has been going on over the last couple of years, in performing baseline assessments of coral reef fisheries around the region, has been a growing body of information about the status of coral reefs themselves. It has generally been assumed that, whilst there have been known impacts resulting from occasional coral-bleaching events, and around certain heavily urbanised islands, that by and large, over the region as a whole, Pacific Island coral reefs were much healthier than the reefs in most other regions, apart from perhaps the Great Barrier Reef.
45. A preliminary analysis presented at the 4th Heads of Fisheries Meeting, using data collected by identical methodologies from dozens of sites in 6 island groups around the region – the largest-scale collection of integrated quantitative information made to date in the region – presents a more worrying picture. It suggests that the live coral index (live coral cover compared to dead coral) in the region is in fact similar to that of other regions. This is a very preliminary analysis, and will need to be compared rigorously with information from other regions, particularly comparable oceanic island regions¹⁴, but if validated will suggest a more pessimistic future for reef fisheries and outer-island protein security than has hitherto been projected based on the impacts of fishing alone. Future analysis, if these findings are indeed validated, will look into possible causes to see if they are addressable by local action, or if they result from global changes.

Regional support for maximising fisheries trade benefits

46. Apart from the broad-scale efforts by the Forum Secretariat in the development of regional trade agreements and partnerships, there is a need for increased attention by regional sectoral agencies at a more detailed level to certain aspects of trade. In the fisheries sector there is a long-standing and growing need to develop regional cooperation both in export quality standards and in providing rapid and effective feedback on fishery commodity prices in overseas markets, to draw attention to just two issues. Although it is primarily an issue for individual exporting enterprises or national governments, the regional harmonisation of mechanisms for improving and certifying quality of fishery exports, including training, are likely to be of great benefit. Fisheries are the primary foreign exchange-earner for several Pacific Island countries and are significant in most. At the moment, whilst there are various regional and international initiatives to provide some support, there is no central “clearing house” to which governments and exporters can turn for up-to-date overseas market pricing information (particularly for non-tuna species), for comprehensive information on market standards, for large-scale training in achieving these standards, and for developing fishery management plans to provide the environmental assurances that certain markets are starting to demand.

¹⁴ there may, for example, be fundamental ecological differences between continental shelf coral reefs in more nutrient-rich waters and oceanic island reefs

47. There has been considerable progress in the aquarium fish export trade, through the Marine Aquarium Council, and FFA has been able to help countries with advice on international tuna markets, whilst USP and SPC have been providing training in tuna export market quality control, but the approach across the sector as a whole remains piecemeal. However, harnessing the opportunities provided by regional bargaining power and economies of scale is likely to require considerable effort, and the longer-term collaborative interests of the region are often in tension with the shorter-term competitive interests of the private sector.
48. As recognised in the draft “Pacific Plan” it is likely to be quality, rather than quantity, which secures a sustainable future for Pacific Island export fisheries, and providing an appropriate climate to draw development in this direction is likely to require not just national regulation, but a regionally coordinated approach, particularly for the smaller “boutique” fisheries like trochus and deepwater snapper. Possibly this regional level of coordination would be best addressed through a regional consortium of commercial enterprises, and it would be useful to discuss this within a regional sectoral forum of the kind that was recently held at the University of the South Pacific for tuna fishery subsector operators. The whole initiative is likely to require regional agency secretariat support, and possibly a model may be developed through the FFA/SPC/EU “DevFish” programme.

Safety at sea for small fishing vessels

49. To bring this brief catalogue of “issues arising” to a close, a word about safety at sea for small fishing boats. This has been a theme that has run in the background of the work of both the SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme and national governments for decades, but an expert consultation run earlier in the year (a result of collaboration between FAO and SPC) suggests that the time is overdue for this social issue to come to the fore.
50. Like road-safety, sea-safety can only be developed to a certain extent under self-help and public awareness programmes, and more definite regulatory oversight and compliance mechanisms will be necessary if governments wish to cut the incident and death-rate still further. The steady encroachment of modern technology has in some cases resulted in the loss of traditional safety mechanisms inherent in putting small fishing canoes to sea. Pacific Island navigators, particularly Micronesians, still have a remarkable survival record when lost at sea and the intention would not be to compel village subsistence level fishers to buy a full range of expensive modern safety gear, but to require certain basic precautions to be instilled alongside present-day fishing practices. Certain SPC island members have excellent systems already in place which demonstrate achievable practices, and the cost of extended aerial search and rescue operations can be greatly reduced by inexpensive modern location devices.
51. The 4th Heads of Fisheries meeting tasked SPC with developing a nationally-targeted practical sea-safety improvement programme that draws on the expertise and capability of both FAO and the IMO, and both organisations have already responded positively to this request, although a major project of the type envisaged will probably need to wait until the 2006 FAO budgetary cycle before kicking off in earnest. In the meantime SPC will gather information as part of the general database of SPC member fisheries management and administration capacity that will be compiled under the office of the Director of Marine Resources through 2005.

3. SECTORAL MEETINGS

3.1 Fourth SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting (HoF4)

52. The fourth SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting was held in Noumea in August, and was attended by more than 100 fisheries representatives and observers. The meeting was ably and sensitively chaired by New Zealand, and provided a forum for a very useful exchange of views and experiences, as well as feedback on the SPC fisheries work programmes. The outputs of the meeting are available on the website¹⁵, and the Chair's report to the Chair of CRGA will be included as Annex 2 when it is completed, and will be presented to CRGA in person. If the tradition of alphabetical rotation of the Chair is maintained, the Chair of the next meeting, HoF5, will be Niue, followed by *la Nouvelle-Calédonie*, however the next full sectoral meeting may be deferred to 2006 and replaced in 2005 by a mixture of smaller technical and national consultations, depending on needs and funding.
53. HoF also agreed a set of terms of reference for the conduct of the meeting (within the overall parameters set by CRGA), and an email list-server¹⁶ has been set up to enable electronic round-table discussion between national and territorial HoF delegates out of session. Such discussion may help obviate the need for regular full annual meetings, but has not been viable until recently because of the variable penetration of email systems into Pacific Island fisheries departments.

3.2 Seventeenth Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB 17)

54. The Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish is an annual meeting of fishery scientists who are working on tuna fisheries in the Pacific Community region, including scientists from Pacific Island countries and territories, Pacific Rim countries and Distant Water Fishing Nations. Unlike HoF, Pacific Island participation is not funded by SPC (although ad-hoc funding is often available to support Pacific Island participants, and this year several airfares were generously funded from Taiwanese sources). SCTB has no formal linkage to SPC governance processes.
55. The SCTB helps to internationally define the best available scientific information about tuna stocks through a consensus of coastal state and fishing nation scientists. And it helps ensure, through peer discussion, that the work of the OFP is of an internationally excellent standard. This year again, SCTB was associated with a Scientific Working Group which will provide formal scientific advice to the first meeting of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific. The report of the 17th SCTB is summarised in Annex 3.

¹⁵ <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF4/E-Outputs-HOF4.pdf>

¹⁶ SPC-HOF@lyris.spc.int (access to the list is controlled and is not open to the public. Another list gonedau@lyris.spc.int has been set up for public discussion, but is not yet activated).

56. It should be noted that SCTB17, as noted by HoF4, strengthened its warning about the status of Bigeye and Yellowfin tuna stocks, and the need to cap, or even reduce, fishing mortality on these species as a whole across the Western and Central Pacific if they are to remain sustainable. Evidence is growing that the bigeye tuna stock in particular has been benefiting from above-average recruitment of juvenile fish in the past few years. It is increasingly likely that recruitment will decline for natural reasons, due to longer-term cyclic climatic regime shift, and that current levels of fishing effort may thus become unsustainable.
57. HoF4 also discussed the findings of SCTB17 and the OFP concerning the overall regional status of the albacore tuna stock. The albacore stock appears to be affected in opposite phase to the tropical tunas, and albacore recruitment is likely to increase as a result. The difficult situation of South Pacific albacore fisheries, particularly Pacific Island small-scale longline enterprises, appears already to be easing in several EEZs, but the climatic and oceanographic models cannot yet take account of potential local depletions caused by rapid growth of intensive albacore fishing within EEZs. Pacific Island fishing businesses and fisheries managers need to be aware of these interactions, and to avoid over-investment¹⁷, and SPC and FFA are continuing to work towards producing presentations of scientific analyses which make these likely effects more understandable to government and business planners. Already major strides have been made in making this scientific information more accessible to non-specialists, as presentations at the recent HoF and USP private-sector meetings have demonstrated, and as we intend to illustrate at CRGA.
58. It should be noted that the 17th meeting was probably the last SCTB, and that the role of this committee is now expected to be taken over by the Scientific Committee of the new Tuna Commission. OFP will of course continue to be governed by CRGA and the Pacific Community Conference, with sectoral advice continuing to be provided by the SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting.
- 3.4 9th Meeting of the Association of Pacific Islands Maritime Training Institutions & Maritime Authorities (APIMTIMA 9)**
59. The 9th meeting of the Association of Pacific Islands Maritime Training Institutions & Maritime Authorities (APIMTIMA) – now known as the Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA) was held in May 2004 in Nadi, and has been held annually since 1996. PacMA is the main collective linkage between the SPC Regional Maritime Programme and its member country clients from maritime administrations, maritime training institutes, ports, the maritime legal sector and the general shipping industry. Participants were drawn from 19 countries and observers from several organisations. A brief report of the meeting is included as Annex 4.

¹⁷ It should be noted that Pacific Island longliners catch bigeye and yellowfin tuna as well as the lower-priced albacore, and most rely for their profitability on those more lucrative bigeye and yellowfin catches – species against which stock status warnings have been posted.

CONCLUSION

60. This paper has provided an overview of the operations of the Division, and summarised some of the major issues, as well as providing the recommendations of several meetings of SPC member country and territory sectoral specialists. More detailed outputs of the constituent sections and programmes of the Division are available either as annexes, or on the website (particularly at the website of the 4th Heads of Fisheries Meeting¹⁸, and the Divisional website¹⁹).
61. CRGA is invited to discuss the work of the Marine Resources Division and provide guidance on its direction as appropriate.

12 September 2004

¹⁸ <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF4/index.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.spc.int/mrd/org/org.html>

Annex 1

Staff of the Marine Resources Division

<i>Title</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Prog</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Funds</i>
STAFF RECRUITED BY INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISEMENT					
DIRECTOR	ADAMS, TIM	UK	EXEC	L7	CORE
OCEANIC FISHERIES PROG MANAGER	HAMPTON, JOHN	AUSTRALIA	OFF	K7	CORE
*PRINCIPAL FISHERIES SCIENTIST (OCEANIC STATISTICS)	LAWSON, TIM	CANADA	OFF	J9	NC**
*MARITIME TRAINING ADVISER	HOGAN, JOHN	NEW ZEALAND	RMP	J9	NC
FISHERIES TRAINING SPECIALIST	LUCIANI, TERIIHAUROA	FR.POLYNESIA	CFP	J8	NC
*FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT ADVISER	CHAPMAN, LINDSAY	AUSTRALIA	CFP	J8	CORE
FISHERIES DATABASE SUPERVISOR	WILLIAMS, PETER	AUSTRALIA	OFF	J8	NC
*FISHERIES INFORMATION ADVISER	GAUDECHOUX, JEAN-PA	FRANCE	CFP	J7	NC
*FISHERIES TRAINING ADVISER	BLANC, MICHEL	FRANCE	CFP	J7	NC
†*PRINCIPAL FISHERIES SCIENTIST (OCEANIC BIOLOGY & ECOLOGY)	LEHODEY, PATRICK	FRANCE	OFF	J7	NC
†*REEF FISHERIES OBSERVATORY COORDINATOR	POWER, MARY	IRELAND	CFP	J7	NC
LIVE REEF FISHERIES SPECIALIST	YEETING, BEING	KIRIBATI	CFP	J7	NC
FISHERIES INFORMATION SPECIALIST	DESURMONT, AYMERIC	FRANCE	CFP	J6	NC
*COASTAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ADVISER	FA'ASILI, UETA	SAMOA	CFP	J5	NC
*AQUACULTURE ADVISER	PONIA, BEN	COOK ISLANDS	CFP	J5	NC
*PRINCIPAL FISHERIES SCIENTIST (OCEANIC STOCK ASSM)	LANGLEY, ADAM	NEW ZEALAND	OFF	J5	NC
†REEF FISHERIES DATA MANAGER	MAGRON, FRANCK	FRANCE	CFP	J4	NC
†SENIOR REEF FISHERIES SCIENTIST (SOCIOECONOMICS)	KRONEN, MECKI	GERMANY	CFP	J4	NC
†SENIOR REEF FISHERIES SCIENTIST (INVERTEBRATE FISHERIES)	FRIEDMAN, KIM	UK	CFP	J4	NC
†SENIOR REEF FISHERIES SCIENTIST (VERTEBRATE FISHERIES)	VIGLIOLA, LAURENT	FRANCE	CFP	J4	NC
†SENIOR FISHERIES SCIENTIST	KIRBY, DAVID	UK	OFF	J4	NC
†FISHERIES RESEARCH SCIENTIST (ECOSYSTEMS)	ALLAIN, VALERIE	FRANCE	OFF	J3	NC
†PORT SAMPLING AND OBSERVER SUPERVISOR	SHARPLES, PETER	UK	OFF	J2	NC
†BIOLOGICAL TECHNICIAN	LEROY, BRUNO	FRANCE	OFF	J2	NC
SENIOR FISHERIES SCIENTIST (STOCK ASSM)	MOLONEY, BRETT	AUSTRALIA	OFF	J2	NC
FISHERIES RESEARCH SCIENTIST	Vacant		OFF	J	NC
FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT SCIENTIST	BEVERLY, STEPHEN	USA	CFP	I9	NC
FISHERIES MONITORING SUPERVISOR	BROGAN, DEIRDRE	EIRE	OFF	I9	NC
RESEARCH OFFICER/ANALYST	SCHNEITER, EMMANUEL	FRANCE	OFF	I9	NC
FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT OFFICER	SOKIMI, WILLIAM	FIJI	CFP	I9	NC
PROGRAMMER/RESEARCH OFFICER	MILLAR, COLIN	AUSTRALIA	OFF	I8	NC
†PORT SAMPLING AND OBSERVER TRAINER	FUKOFUKA, SIOSIFA	TONGA	OFF	I8	NC
†REEF FISHERIES SCIENTIST	SAUNI, SAMASONI	TUVALU	CFP	I7	NC
†RESEARCH OFFICER (DATA)	BOUYE, FABRICE	N CALEDONIA	OFF	I7	NC
COASTAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT OFFICER	VUNISEA, ALITI	FIJI	CFP	I7	NC
AQUACULTURE SPECIALIST	NAND LAL, SATYA	FIJI	CFP	I7	NC
MARITIME LEGAL OFFICER	TUFUGA, FANGALOA	SAMOA	RMP	I4	CORE
MARITIME TRAINING OFFICER	VATA, APENISA	FIJI	RMP	I3	NC

PACIFIC ISLAND ASSOCIATE STAFF					
REEF FISHERIES ASSOCIATE	BOBLIN, PIERRE	N CALEDONIA	CFP	non	NC
REEF FISHERIES ASSOCIATE	AWIRA, RIBANAATAKA	KIRIBATI	CFP	non	NC
LIVE REEF FISHERIES ASSOCIATE	PAKOA, KALO	VANUATU	CFP	non	NC
COASTAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATE (short-term)		MARSHALLS	CFP	non	NC
FISHERIES INFORMATION & TRAINING ASSOCIATE (short-term)	(short-term annual)	PACIFIC ISLANDS	CFP	non	NC
STAFF RECRUITED BY LOCAL ADVERTISEMENT					
TOPP PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATOR	PARRY, KAY	UK	OFF	H8	NC
REEF FISHERIES OBSERVATORY ADMINISTRATOR	BUI, MARIE-THERESE	NEW CALEDONIA	CFP	H1	NC
SECRETARY TO THE DIRECTOR, MARINE RESOURCES	LECOMTE, HELENE	NEW CALEDONIA	EXEC	H1	CORE
FISHERY MONITORING SUPERVISOR - LIAISON OFFICER (NC)	BERTRAND, GEOFFREY	NEW CALEDONIA	OFF	H1	NC
FISHERY MONITORING SUPERVISOR - LIAISON OFFICER (FP)	ESCANDE, VATEA	FRENCH POLYNESIA	OFF	H1	NC
MARITIME INFORMATION ASSISTANT	STREETER, MEGAN	FIJI	RMP	H1	NC
DOCUMENTALIST/ PROGRAMME ASSISTANT (OFF)	IXEKO, HELENE	NEW CALEDONIA	OFF	G4	NC
MARITIME ASSISTANT	RABUKAWAQA, INISE	FIJI	RMP	G3	NC
FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT	CHOI, YOUNGMI	KOREA	CFP	G2	NC
FISHERIES TRAINING ASSISTANT	BURY, CHRISTINE	FRANCE	CFP	G2	NC
FISHERIES INFORMATION ASSISTANT	MEZIERE, SOPHIE	FRANCE	CFP	G1	NC
AQUACULTURE ASSISTANT	HNAUJIE, MARIE-ANGE	NEW CALEDONIA	CFP	G1	NC
DATA ENTRY TECHNICIAN(OFP)	SAVEA, SONIA	N CALEDONIA	OFF	E9	NC
DATA ENTRY TECHNICIAN(OFP)	LENORMAND, NATHALIE	N CALEDONIA	OFF	E9	NC
DATA ENTRY TECHNICIAN(OFP)	LE PIRONNEC, SYLVIE	N CALEDONIA	OFF	E9	NC
DATA ENTRY TECHNICIAN(OFP)	NGUYEN, CHRISTINE	N CALEDONIA	OFF	E5	NC
DATA ENTRY TECHNICIAN(OFP)	CHUVAND, STEPHANIE	N CALEDONIA	OFF	E1	NC
DATA ENTRY TECHNICIAN(OFP)	DIOHOUE, MARIEPIERRE	N CALEDONIA	OFF	E1	NC

*Section Head post **NC=Non-core TPosts restricted to ACP (Lomé) & EU nationals

Note: this list was compiled on 13th September 2004 and may have changed by the time of CRGA

Annex 2

**Report of the Chair of the
4th SPC HEADS OF FISHERIES MEETING
to the Chair of the
34th SPC COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF ADMINISTRATIONS AND
GOVERNMENTS**

- Note 1: The HoF4 Chair will be invited to present this report verbally;
- Note 2: The HoF4 agreed outputs are available on the SPC website at <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF4/E-Outputs-HOF4.pdf>

Annex 3

**Seventeenth Meeting of the
STANDING COMMITTEE ON TUNA AND BILLFISH
(Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands, 9–18 August 2004)**

[Summary reports of individual working groups included in the Executive Summary are not reproduced here, but the full summary is available on the website at

<http://www.spc.int/OceanFish/Html/SCTB/SCTB17/Execsum.pdf>

Meeting papers are available at <http://www.spc.int/oceanfish/Html/SCTB/SCTB17/index.htm>]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The seventeenth meeting of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB 17) was held on 9-18 August 2004 in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands. SCTB 17 was attended by participants from Australia, Canada, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Cook Islands, European Union, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Japan, Kiribati, Korea, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Peoples Republic of China, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Taiwan, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America and Vanuatu. Participants from various regional and international organizations also attended the meeting. These included the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

The SCTB provides a forum for scientists and others with an interest in the tuna and billfish stocks of the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) to meet to discuss scientific issues related to data, research, and stock assessment. Its aims are to:

1. coordinate fisheries data collection, compilation and dissemination according to agreed principles and procedures;
2. review research on the biology, ecology, environment and fisheries for tunas and associated species in the WCPO;
3. identify research needs and provide a means of coordination, including the fostering of collaborative research, to most efficiently and effectively meet those needs;
4. review information pertaining to the status of the stocks of tunas and associated species in the WCPO, and to provide statements on stock status where appropriate, and;
5. provide opinions on various scientific issues related to data, research and stock assessment of WCPO tuna fisheries.

The SCTB Chairman and Working Group Coordinators for SCTB 17 were as follows :

SCTB Chairman:	Dr SungKwon Soh
Biology WG:	Dr Talbot Murray
Ecosystem & Bycatch WG:	Mr Paul Dalzell
Fishing Technology WG:	Mr David Itano
Methods WG:	Dr John Sibert
Statistics WG:	Mr Tim Lawson
Stock Assessment WG:	Dr Naozumi Miyabe and Dr Max Stocker

The meeting agenda, working papers presented at the meeting and list of participants are provided in Appendices 1, 2 and 3, respectively. The meeting convened as six working groups: the Statistics Working Group, the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Biology Working Group, the Ecosystem & Bycatch Working Group, Fishing Technology Working Group, the Methods Working Group and the HMS Stock Assessment Working Group. This 'thematic' working group structure differed from the species-based approach used at previous SCTBs.

The Statistics, Methods and Fishing Technology Working Groups held a series of meeting in the two days prior to the SCTB 17 plenary session. They considered a range of issues relevant to their respective terms of reference. Summaries of these meetings were presented to SCTB 17 and summary statements for each Working Group are provided.

The HMS Biology, HMS Stock Assessment and Ecosystem & Bycatch Working groups were convened during the main SCTB 17 session. Summary reports of these Working Groups are provided. The report of the HMS Stock Assessment Working Group incorporates statements on the status of bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack, and South Pacific albacore tuna.

The initial overview of Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) tuna fisheries provided details of recent and historical fishery developments. A summary of this information is presented in the report of the HMS Stock Assessment Working Group. Further details of fisheries at the national level were elaborated in a series of National Fisheries Reports presented by national representatives. Reports on relevant activities of other organizations were received from FAO, IATTC and the Pelagic Fisheries Research Program of the University of Hawaii.

SCTB 17 discussed a range of research and fishery statistics needs for the WCPO (Appendix 4). The priority needs identified by SCTB 16 and adopted by the 2nd meeting of the Scientific Coordinating Group were again discussed and progress noted (items 1 to 6 below). Also, SCTB 17 suggested two additional issues (Items 7 and 8 below) that it felt needed to be highlighted.

Better estimation of current catch and catch composition from Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam

A 'Proposal for monitoring the catches of highly migratory species in the Philippines and the Pacific Ocean waters of Indonesia' was presented at PrepCon VI (Bali, April 2004). Under this project, a review of the tuna fisheries and the current statistical system was conducted in the Philippines in July 2004, with funding from Australia. This review highlighted significant problems with the collation of fisheries statistics in the Philippines. One year of port sampling will commence later in 2004, with funding from the United States and another donor. SCTB strongly encouraged potential donors to contribute funds for the balance of the project, i.e. a second year of port sampling in the Philippines and two years of port sampling in Indonesia. There is also a continuing need to compile information on the longline fishery in Vietnam, including estimates of annual catches.

Reconstruction of early catch history (catch, effort, size composition) for all fisheries

The incorporation of complete time series of significant industrial fishing into stock assessments generally allows a fuller understanding of population abundance variability over a range of environmental regimes. Significant progress has been made, e.g. the incorporation of pre-1965 Japanese longline size data into bigeye and yellowfin tuna stock assessments. Current work is examining pre-1972 skipjack data for the Japanese pole-and-line fisheries. Further efforts in this area will be important to further reduce uncertainties in the stock assessment.

Further development of methods to standardise effort, including the better use of vessel operational details, environmental data and archival tagging data

This work has been ongoing and improvements in effort standardisation for both longline and purse-seine fisheries were presented to SCTB 17. There is a need for finer scale data on the environment and on habitat preferences, as well as information on vessel, gear and operational details, for example, better information to estimate hook depths. Additional variables may be included in the standardisation of effort and more flexible use of standardized effort made in assessment models. There is a forthcoming IATTC meeting on purse seine effort standardization and its deliberations will be considered. The use of 'Longhurst'-type Large Marine Ecosystems as regions for stock assessments will be explored.

Ongoing efforts to reduce uncertainty in assessments, through improved data inputs, sensitivity analysis and simulations

There is a need for better species composition data, especially on improved discrimination between small yellowfin and bigeye. Statistical relations among observer, logbook, and port sampling and landing data need to be established. WPFC databases should provide for general biological data, particularly for parameters relevant to stock assessment. Assessment models should refine the parameterization of catchability between regions and explore the estimation of mortality at age. The use of simple production models may also be explored. Bigeye assessments should be compared for the EPO, WCPO, Pacific-wide and with other oceans. Fishing power and effort needs to be characterized and quantified, and there is a broad range of issues related to FADs.

Evaluation of possible regime shifts/changes in productivity and development of improved/alternative estimates of recruitment where possible

In response to the SCG 2 recommendations, a project proposal was developed by OFP in collaboration with NRIFS and NIWA. The project has been funded by the Pelagic Fisheries Research Program of the University of Hawaii and preliminary results were presented at SCTB 17. This work will continue through the collection of empirical data and simulation studies to characterise long-term variability in catch histories and physical/biological time series from the WCPO. Operational metrics to detect changes in productivity and recruitment will be developed. These and other ecosystem indicators may then be used in stock assessments. SCTB17 also recommends the development of empirical recruitment indicators to compare with model estimations.

Large-scale tagging experiments for the main target tuna species in the WCPO.

This has been recommended by successive SCTBs as the highest research priority for the region. Such a project will provide better estimates of movement, mortality and other important parameters for stock assessment. Previous work undertaken more than 10 years ago has underpinned stock assessments but there is a need for regular if not continuous tagging studies of all species of interest. This work could be considered analogous to trawl surveys for demersal fisheries as the data provided are quasi-independent of the fisheries themselves. A large-scale tagging experiment would also permit further scientific research relevant to WCPO fisheries, including biology, ecology and oceanography. Various options for conducting tagging of tropical tunas were presented to SCTB 17 and the likely costs of a two-year tag release programme estimated. The meeting agreed to establish a small group to further develop a concept paper that might be made available to the Commission at its December 2004 meeting.

Assessing impacts of fishing and the environment on the pelagic ecosystem

The WCPFC Convention (Article 5d) requires members 'to assess the impacts of fishing, other human activities and environmental factors on target stocks, non-target species, and species belonging to the same ecosystem or dependent upon or associated with the target stocks'. This can be achieved through studies of forage species by in situ sampling and/or diet analysis, the continued development of modeling methodologies, the definition and identification of habitats of special concern, and the mitigation of bycatch. Biological/ecological studies should be carried out for species of special concern.

Regional Observer Programme

Article 28 of the Convention requires the Commission to 'develop a regional observer programme to collect verified catch data, other scientific data and additional information related to the fishery from the Convention Area and to monitor the implementation of the conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission'. The data needed for scientific purposes includes size and species composition, bycatch and discards. There needs to be coordination with national observer programmes, particularly regarding species of special concern. Additionally, there is a need for sub-regional coordinators for supervision of port samplers and observers. Data collection needs to be expanded to all fleets, in particular distant water longline fleets, and information should be collected on IUU (Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported) fishing activities.

Consideration of issues requested by PrepCon WG-II

PrepCon WG-II recommended several tasks for consideration by SCTB17 and SCG, among them data standards and advice on analyses of management options respectively. SCTB17 considered these issues and reviewed the legal basis for data requirements and standards of the new WCPFC as well as existing standards that could be adopted by that Commission. The meeting also discussed requisites for management options analyses, specifically reference points and decision rules. The meeting concluded that the topic is much too broad to be properly reviewed in the time that was available. It was noted that SCTB11 held a workshop on the precautionary approach that is relevant to these issues. The meeting further concluded that the topic should be reviewed and discussed in the future at a meeting for that purpose and that fishery managers of the new Commission should also be involved. The meeting also considered the working group structure that was used for SCTB17. This new structure generally functioned more smoothly; it is recommended that this or a similar structure be adopted for the Specialist Working Groups of the Scientific Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) when it is established.

Closing remarks

At the end of SCTB17, Chairman Sung Kwon Soh (Korea) asked participants to share their personal experiences of the SCTB. Apolosi Turaganivalu (Fiji, on behalf of the Pacific Island countries), John Hampton (OFP), John Sibert (PFRP, USA), Chung-Hai Kwoh (Taiwan), Ziro Suzuki (NRIFSF, Japan), Talbot Murray (New Zealand), Jacek Majkowski (FAO), and Chairman Soh himself all spoke fondly of the achievements of the SCTB throughout the years.

All speakers were in agreement that the SCTB had achieved far more than its original modest goals, that the data collection, compilation and analyses have evolved dramatically, and that the stock assessments are now world class. Notwithstanding the concerns expressed by SCTB17, stock conditions remain healthier in our region than for other oceans and participants expressed the hope that sustainability of the resources would be ensured by quick and wise management.

One of the most important achievements of SCTB has been to bring together representatives of the Distant Water Fishing Nations and the Pacific Island Countries and Territories on an equal footing. Colleagues have become friends and from friendships grew understanding. This has assisted the development of Pacific Island Countries and Territories and of WCPO fisheries. SCTB has provided a unique experience and learning process and participants at SCTB17 hope that the collegiality and cooperative spirit of SCTB will continue through into the SC.

All speakers highlighted the critical role played by the SPC, and in particular the OFP and its present and previous leaders, in providing support for SCTB meetings and technical assistance to SPC members and other parties. Views were expressed that the critical role of the OFP be retained and its capabilities expanded within the context of the new Commission.

Thanks were extended to our Chair, Sung Kwon Soh, to all the Working Group Chairs, to the rapporteurs, and a special thanks to Glen Joseph and all the MIMRA team for hosting this last meeting of SCTB. Glen Joseph thanked the Honourable Minister John M. Silk, all the MIMRA staff, the participants at STCB17, the staff of OFP and the Marshall Island Resort staff.

Our Chair then formally closed the last meeting of SCTB, bidding farewell to SCTB and welcome to the SC.

**[the summary reports of working groups are too voluminous to reproduce here, but contain important advice and can be viewed, in addition to this overall summary, at
<http://www.spc.int/oceanfish/Html/SCTB/SCTB17/SCTB17ExecSum.pdf> - 1.6 megabytes]**

Annex 4

**NINTH MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PACIFIC ISLANDS
MARITIME TRAINING INSTITUTIONS AND MARITIME AUTHORITIES**

Nadi, Fiji Islands, 17 – 18 May 2004

SUMMARY

The Ninth Meeting of the Association of Pacific Islands Maritime Training Institutions and Maritime Authorities (APIMTIMA) was held in Nadi, Fiji from 17 to 18 May 2004.

The following Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) were represented: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Representatives of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's (SPC) Fisheries Training Section in Noumea and the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme also attended.

Representatives from the Australian Maritime College (AMC), Asia Pacific Maritime Institute (APMI), New Zealand Maritime Safety Authority (NZMSA) and New Zealand Maritime School (NZMS) attended as observers.

WELCOME REMARKS; ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON, DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, SECRETARY, TREASURER AND DRAFTING COMMITTEE AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Executive Chairman, Maselino Tominiko of Samoa, assisted by Ken Barnett of Vanuatu and Delai Vakasilimi of Fiji, opened the meeting. Maselino thanked French Polynesia for agreeing to go without interpretation services for this meeting and thus forego Chair responsibilities for a year, allowing the Executive Committee to chair the meeting in this new format.

The Solomon Islands delegate led the opening prayer. The agenda was adopted after a motion by Samoa, which was seconded by Solomon Islands.

The Secretariat presented the Financial Report and suggested that the Meeting decide on how to deal with investing the fund. After some discussion it was agreed to keep the funds in a savings account in FJD. The Meeting also agreed that RMP manage the APIMTIMA account and conduct financial transactions on behalf of the Association, with an annual audited financial report to be presented at each meeting. The Treasurer's Report was adopted after a motion by Samoa that was seconded by Solomon Islands.

The minutes of the 8th meeting of APIMTIMA were adopted but the question of mandate to make resolutions was raised by Tonga. The Chair suggested that this topic be discussed under a different agenda item. This was seconded by PNG and carried forward to a later agenda item.

SPC RMP REVIEW RESPONSE

The Director of Land Resources Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Mr Aleki Sisifa presented the Regional Maritime Programme (RMP) Review Report and Response on behalf of the SPC Executive. He also outlined key elements of the latest version of the RMP Strategic Plan.

It was noted that the restructure of the RMP lacked the interest of the shipping community and that the positions of the Regional Maritime Legal Adviser appeared to be downgraded. There was a question regarding whether the Association of Pacific Ports would now become a member of APIMTIMA as well – a matter for the Meeting to decide and whether the level of service member countries could expect under the new structure would be maintained. The Secretariat assured members that the quality of the service would always be the same.

FUTURE OF APIMTIMA

a) The Role of APIMTIMA

The Secretariat presented a paper on the **Role of APIMTIMA**. This was originally presented at the 8th meeting of APIMTIMA and was now put forward as an information paper to refresh the memories of those present.

Much discussion followed including the following comments from members:

Tonga expressed concerns over how this Association would be affected by their initiative to table the establishment of a separate Regional Maritime Transport Organisation at the next Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting. The Secretariat responded that it was up to APIMTIMA to decide on the way forward but it felt that another Organisation would dilute the work of APIMTIMA.

French Polynesia asked the following questions in order to clarify the way forward:

- a. What was the purpose of the Association and for whom did the Association need to work.
- b. How were the Secretariat and the subcommittees to do this work.
- c. When was this work to be done with regard to regularity of meetings; and
- d. What were the resources available to do this work.

He commented that APIMTIMA dealt with Maritime Administrations and Training so it was not the role of APIMTIMA to advise Ministers as that led to becoming a political forum. The Chair responded that members needed to remember the reasons why APIMTIMA came into existence 10 years ago.

Tonga stated that a Regional Maritime Transport Organisation needed to be developed to handle issues in that sector whereas APIMTIMA could continue to handle the training and legal aspects of the maritime sector. Tonga felt that APIMTIMA would over-extend its role in the Maritime Sector if it evolved to include other mandates. Tonga reported that few countries in the Pacific had indicated their interest and support for its initiative to create a new regional organisation.

The representative of SPC Executive stated that the existence of APIMTIMA for 10 years proved that it served the needs of stakeholders. The eminent persons review of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) reflected the evolution of two main organisations namely, SPC as technical and PIFS as political into the 10 current regional organisations. The vision in the Pacific continued to evolve and the Ministers who attended the Forum Leaders Meetings felt that they could not deal with every aspect that was brought to their attention. Since SPC supported the expansion of APIMTIMA then it was for this Meeting to make a decision on the future direction that APIMTIMA needed to take instead of waiting for feedback from another forum on a potential agenda issue.

b) APIMTIMA – the future

The Vanuatu delegate then made a presentation on APIMTIMA – the Future, which set the scene for what this Meeting needed to do. It raised questions and proposed three options on the Future Role of APIMTIMA with noted issues related to these options. Considerable debate followed the presentation with various members asking for clarification.

It was generally agreed that Option 3 presented the best way forward but there were differing ideas on how this should be achieved. The Secretariat clarified that the RMP envisaged the Association of Pacific Ports (APP) and APIMTIMA working in closer collaboration with each other to discuss issues of mutual concern.

c) Role of The Executive of APIMTIMA

The PNG delegate presented a paper on the Role of the Executive Committee. He noted that six members of the current interim Executive had met twice since the last AGM, once in October in Apia and again in March in Auckland.

Their main discussion focused on the future Role of APIMTIMA, the draft agenda for the 9th meeting of APIMTIMA and relevant papers that needed to be presented to deal with agenda issues.

The two main questions that needed to be resolved concerned the structural function of the new Association and whether the Executive Committee remained as it currently was or whether it needed to be modified. He noted that this Meeting needed to make a decision on the future direction of APIMTIMA.

Tonga queried the composition of Executive Committee membership and felt that high-level officials were needed to provide authoritative decisions. The Chair clarified that the composition of the Executive Committee depended on whether the Association would expand or not. French Polynesia questioned the legality of the existence of national committees.

d) Draft Constitution with Name Change

The Draft Articles of Association were discussed and debated at length. Concerns were raised concerning the name change, definitions, purpose, membership, executive committee, members as opposed to representatives as well as rights and responsibilities.

Palau moved the motion to adopt Option 3. It was seconded by Fiji.

Some degree of consensus was achieved with this adoption of Option 3 and continuing debate centered on the extent to which the role of APIMTIMA was to be extended and the degree of expansion needed to be decided upon.

The Vanuatu delegate then proceeded to work through the draft Articles of Association clause by clause to further achieve consensus. It was agreed that an amended draft would then be circulated the following day for further discussion.

An amended version of the draft Articles of Association was tabled for consideration and discussion clause by clause to achieve consensus. Delegates queried various aspects of the draft and minor changes were made. It was agreed that a final draft would be circulated after lunch for confirmation and adoption.

The Chair presented the Final Draft Articles of Association for approval. Much concern was raised about the issue of representatives, who were government officials, needing approval from Foreign Affairs to attend regional meetings. The Secretariat responded that the SPC format of invitations would continue to be carried out whereby representatives are invited directly with copies of the invitation sent to Foreign Affairs as had been done in the past. This did not seem to be a problem.

The Tonga delegate proposed that the Meeting agree only in principle to adopt the final draft subject to government endorsement. Tonga would only vote after consultation with government and the legal department and, given three months to provide feedback, a draft could be tabled at the next APIMTIMA meeting for formal endorsement.

The Palau delegate took the reverse point of view stating that it would rather have the body as a whole adopt the final draft before presenting it to their governments as a member of the "Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PACMA)". In essence there would no longer be an APIMTIMA and if governments did not wish to retain membership of PACMA then they could go through the proper resignation procedures.

Tonga reserved their right to adopt the Articles of Association until they sought their government's views.

Guam offered advice that since a representative was sent to represent his country, regardless of what that representative decided to support, once a decision was made then it was the representative's responsibility to advise his government accordingly.

The French Polynesia delegate clarified that he did not have the authority to make a decision but would need to obtain endorsement from his government.

The Chair then moved to put the final draft of the Articles of Association to the vote. 13 member countries voted in favour and there were no votes against. The motion was recorded with 2 member countries abstaining. The final draft was thus accepted in accordance with the two third majority required by the original APIMTIMA charter and would take effect immediately. Samoa proposed that the current interim Executive Committee continue as the Executive Committee of PIMA for the next three years. This motion was seconded by the Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

As there appeared to be 10 members on the interim Executive it was agreed that a meeting of this Executive during the following three days would address the issue. There was currently one surviving trustee from the original Association and, as he confirmed his agreement to continue in office, the Executive would recommend the appointment of three new Trustees. SPC undertook to present the amended Constitution for registration under the Fiji Charitable Trust Act (CAP 225).

The Tonga delegate felt that they needed to present to their government the amended Articles of Association, as they were merely representatives of their country. They felt that as a representative they had an obligation to seek their government's endorsement for membership of PACMA. The French Polynesia delegate supported Tonga's view and stated that due to their system of government they would need to consult with government before endorsing the Articles of Association, which was why they abstained from voting.

e) Composition of APIMTIMA Sub-committees and Election of Members

- i) The Fiji delegate, Delai Vakasilimi, made a presentation on behalf of the inaugural Examiners/Assessors Subcommittee meeting in Auckland. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to moderate examination papers prepared by New Zealand Maritime School for the Pacific Islands. The papers covered all nautical and engineering subjects and grades from Class 3 to Ratings.

The Committee also looked at a uniform level of questions and the possibility of creating a question bank that the region could use to maintain standards. The Committee compared the current certification structure with an amended certificate structure put forward by SPC. It was agreed that the amended structure was suitable but note was made that countries needed to set their own limits for each certificate group.

It was also noted that under the amended structure, certificate holders would need special endorsement to be able to trade inter-regionally. Questions were asked by delegates seeking clarification on various issues. The Cook Island delegate then proposed the formalisation of the examiners/moderators subcommittee, which was seconded by Tuvalu and confirmed by the Plenary

- ii) The Chair introduced the Auditors Subcommittee and opened it for discussion.

Tonga supported the proposal and suggested that only qualified auditors be members of this subcommittee as there was a need to update/upgrade present qualifications. Jeff Hawkins agreed and was prepared to send out necessary papers for upgrading auditors.

At this point the French Polynesia delegate suggested that the Executive Committee put forward Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the establishment of subcommittees. The Chair agreed that this would be done.

The French Polynesia delegate also suggested that subcommittees be established on a temporary basis for specific tasks in order to coincide with relevant issues. The Secretariat reiterated that the establishment or disbanding of subcommittees would occur upon advice from the Executive Committee as the need arose.

- iii) The Chair then opened up the Lecturers Subcommittee for discussion and proposal. It was agreed that examiners, moderators and maritime lecturers would form one subcommittee since there was no need for a separate Lecturers sub-committee at the present time.
- iv) The Chair then asked the Secretariat to introduce the Port State Control subcommittee. After further discussion and debate it was agreed that flag and port state control could form another subcommittee and that maritime security, safety and marine pollution could be a separate subcommittee.

The motion was carried forward by the Cook Islands and seconded by PNG.

It was proposed that the three new subcommittees be put into effect and monitored before any further subcommittees were formed.

- v) The Chair clarified that members agreed by consensus to establish the following subcommittees:
1. Moderators, Examiners and Maritime Lecturers
 2. Flag and Port State Control/Surveying
 3. Auditing.

f) Status of Resolutions

The Chair invited Vanuatu to provide an overview of the paper regarding status of resolutions of the Association since 1999. The Vanuatu delegate explained that many resolutions had been formed but the Association had yet to review these resolutions in order to establish what had been accomplished and what still needed to be done. The purpose of this paper was to raise member's awareness of matters that were ongoing and that needed to be taken up with the new Executive Committee.

After a suggestion from the floor, the Chair then proceeded to quickly scan the resolutions to determine which had already been actioned and which were ongoing or completed so that countries could focus only on what had not yet been done. The Meeting agreed that all completed resolutions would be closed and ongoing resolutions would warrant feed back from countries within three months.

WATCHKEEPING FOR RATINGS

The Vanuatu delegate made a presentation on Watchkeeping for Ratings. He explained that as Vanuatu offered training for seafarers employed on international vessels they needed to ensure that the highest quality and standards were maintained. Some difficulties were encountered with the training of deck ratings for larger vessels especially in the area of watchkeeping. To solve this problem Vanuatu developed a training package for use in conjunction with the shiphandling simulator from RMP, which satisfies the requirements of Section A-II/4 of STCW-95. Vanuatu was happy to share these documents with the Association. A CD of all documents was with the Secretariat and if anyone wished to use it, they were welcome to do so. Future development would see the addition of a further module to satisfy Section B-II/4 and a third module to include a qualification similar to the current AB certificate.

RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION OF CERTIFICATES.

The Secretariat provided an update on the status of the Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding between PICTs for mutual recognition of certificates of seafarers on board local vessels. Kiribati, Nauru and Niue were the only countries that had not yet signed this agreement. It was agreed that Niue would handcarry the 20 copies to be signed by their appropriate Minister before the RMLA would handcarry these copies to Kiribati for signatures. After all countries had signed the agreement, one fully signed copy would be dispensed to each PICT. Members understood the content of this agreement to recognise certificates issued to seafarers by PICTs on the White List of the STCW-95. The Secretariat confirmed that from a legal perspective countries would be bound by the agreement from the date that they signed it.

REGIONAL AUDIT AND REGIONAL ISM STANDARDS

Dr Jeff Hawkins, Asia Pacific Maritime Institute, advised delegates on the current status of the Regional Audit and ISM Standards. He explained that work was progressing steadily but was taking a little longer than expected because the process was being approached from a new direction. Completion was expected within 4 to 6 weeks. The new approach was in line with current IMO thoughts.

REGIONAL CERTIFICATE STRUCTURE

Tim Wilson, New Zealand Maritime School, advised delegates that before competency based training and assessment materials could be developed, it was necessary to determine what the certificate structure was, what size of vessel and area of operation equated to what certificate and what was expected of the holder of the certificate - not what he was supposed to know but what he was expected to do and how he was expected to perform.

This needed to be done in order to harmonise the training and certification within the Pacific region and allow for mutual recognition. Tim agreed to work with the Examiners, Moderators and Lecturers subcommittee towards this goal.

PRESENTATION OF COUNTRY REPORTS

Countries made brief presentations on the issues pertaining to their national initiatives that were pertinent to this meeting.

BALLAST WATER & POLLUTION INITIATIVES

Sefanaia Nawadra, the SPREP/PACPOL Adviser made a presentation on the current status of marine pollution prevention initiatives in the region and future directions that could be taken to obtain technical assistance, equipment and funding from Australia and New Zealand as well as Pacific rim Donor Countries.

SPC FISHERIES TRAINING SECTION

Terii Luciani of SPC's Fisheries Training Section, made a presentation on Bycatch Issues in Tuna Longlining specifically focusing on the capture of marine turtles.

A booklet and CD produced by the SPC Fisheries Training Section were available for participants. Additional material in the form of posters and pamphlets specifying techniques on how to release turtles and other bycatch species in a manner that could prevent drowning would be made available upon request.

WOMEN IN THE MARITIME SECTOR

Members were briefed on the IMO seminar for Women in the Maritime Sector (WIMA) and the resolution passed to establish a maritime association for Pacific Island women with the secretariat to be based to SPC's RMP.

FAO/IMO SMALL BOAT SAFETY

Peter Heathcote, RMP Legal Adviser, made a presentation on behalf of FAO and SPC on the Small Boat Safety consultation that was held in Suva last year.

The following voluminous documents will be provided to CRGA delegates on arrival at the meeting, but some are also immediately available on the SPC website at the footnoted internet addresses

Annex 5 – Regional Maritime Programme 2004 and Work plan progress report

Annex 6 – Coastal Fisheries Programme 2004 Work plan and progress report²⁰

Annex 7 – Oceanic Fisheries Programme 2004 Work plan and progress report²¹

²⁰ Also available as <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF4/doc/E-IP2-HOF4.doc>

²¹ Also available as <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Reports/HOF4/doc/E-IP3-HOF4.doc>