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Community Fisheries Section

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Community Fisheries Section

1. Background

The Community Fisheries Section, originally known as the “Women’s Fisheries Development Project” (WFDP), was established in 1991 as part of the Post Harvest Section of the Coastal Fisheries Programme. The project was aimed at assisting women from coastal fishing communities in the Pacific Islands to participate more effectively in, and to benefit from fisheries activities in the region, particularly in the post-harvest fisheries sector. In 1995, the WFDP was established as a separate section in order to cater for the wider scope of fisheries activities in which women were to participate. The specific objectives of the WFDP were to:

- *Promote the increased involvement of women from coastal fishing communities in the region and national fisheries development activities;*
- *Enhance the income-earning opportunities for women from coastal communities based on seafood harvesting, processing and marketing, using environmentally sound technologies compatible with the sustainable use of marine resources.*

In 1999 the CFS was introduced to the first Head of Fisheries meeting with its present name. With the placement of an extra technical officer within the section in 1998, its target group has broadened to include coastal fishing communities with the emphasis on the involvement of women remained. The objective was then modified to:

Assist coastal fishing communities, particularly women, to effectively participate in, and benefit from regional and national fisheries development activities.

With this modification the majority of assignments carried out by the section in the past have been development activities, which contributed significantly to meeting the modified objective of the section. These include workshops on sustainable harvesting techniques, processing and preservation of seafood, shell craft, marketing and setting up small-scale business. But there has been little opportunity to work on the management aspect of community fisheries, and thus to achieve balance in the achievement its work. To encourage management work in the section's programme of activities, the objective was again reviewed and further modified to:

Promote the participation of coastal fishing communities, particularly women, in the management of subsistence and artisanal fisheries and to allow them to benefit from regional and national fisheries assessment, management and development activities.

This continues to maintain the legitimate thrust behind the previous objectives, while broadening it to cover all sectors of the communities. With this modification, the section will be more proactive in assisting national fisheries authorities to design and set up community fisheries management programmes in order to motivate communities to take actions to manage their subsistence fisheries and marine environment.

2. Staff

The staff of the Community Fisheries Section are listed below.

Table 1 – Staff of the Community Fisheries Section

<i>Staff member</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Term</i>
Ueta Fa'asili	Community Fisheries Adviser	November 2000 to present
Lyn Lambeth	Community Fisheries Officer	September 1998 to present
Marie-Thérèse Bui	Project Assistant	1997 – 1998 (funded by ICFMap) 1999 to present

3. Brief overview of the problems common in subsistence fisheries

Catches of fish and shellfish are believed to have been declining in lagoons and inshore reefs of many island countries in the Pacific region. Reasons for this decline include overexploitation, the use of destructive fishing methods and environmental disturbances. In many Island countries, over-exploitation has resulted from a combination of increasing population sizes and the use of overly-efficient, and sometimes destructive fishing methods. The use of modern materials such as chicken-wire for fence traps and monofilament nylon for gill nets, for example, has made fishing effort more effective. In some cases, modest developments such as the introduction of underwater fishing gear have resulted in a devastating increase in fishing efficiency. Destructive fishing methods include the use of explosives and chemicals such as bleaching agents as well as traditional plant-derived poisons. Environmental disturbances have resulted from not only natural events such as cyclones and storms but also from human activities. These activities include the destruction of nursery areas (including mangrove areas) by road construction and land reclamation. In high islands, poor land management practices have resulted in erosion and the siltation of lagoons.

The general decline in fish stocks is of particular concern in coastal communities where subsistence catches of seafood provide a traditional and important source of protein. In spite of this, most island countries have disregarded the importance of their subsistence fisheries. Government responses to falling subsistence fish catches usually involve setting up public awareness programmes and enacting national laws to protect fish stocks. However, due to many factors, including poor enforcement regimes, and particularly lack of community ownership, these actions are rarely successful. In some cases, attempts are made to involve communities in working with government authorities on a cooperative basis. The involvement of communities in the management of subsistence and marine environment is generally a new and important area in the development of modern national fisheries management, although traditionally communities were very much involved in fisheries management in the Pacific. Given the importance of the subsistence fisheries and the deteriorating situation common amongst island countries of SPC, the Community Fisheries Section, under its programme of activities, will attempt to assist island members to design and set up national programmes to help manage these important resources.

4. Activities undertaken by the CFS

The activities carried out by the section since 1996 through to August 1999 was presented in the first HoF in 1999. This report summarises the work undertaken by the section from September 1999 to June 2001, as detailed in Appendix 1.

5. Work programme

The programme of activities for the CFS has been structured to cover the following areas:

5.1. *Research and assessment:*

This involves initial assignments with countries to analyse the role of men and women in subsistence and artisanal fisheries through the carrying out of baseline studies. These studies identify development options and restrictions, and provide guidelines for support. In addition the data collected is used to assist national governments design management programmes for marine stock.

The key outputs expected of this work area are:

- National assessment reports on the roles and development options for men and women in subsistence and artisanal fisheries;
- National reports to advise government authorities on designs relevant for national community management programmes.
- Gender analysis studies of the tuna industry as the basis for National Tuna Management Plans

5.2. *Management and development support:*

Management and development support depends on the needs identified in the baseline studies. They may include technical inputs that are needed for setting up of national community-based fisheries management programmes. In the past national assignments under development support was largely focussed on the training of women on seafood processing and sustainable exploitation of the inshore fish stocks. Under this work area, the CFS will include training of national programme staff on community facilitation work and development of community fisheries management plans.

Key outputs expected of this work area are:

- National and regional training activities implemented;
- Technical inputs into national management programmes provided.
- Village community fisheries management plans produced
- Resource materials such as training manuals, special interest group bulletin, and videos produced and disseminated.

6. Future activities

6.1 Baseline studies

The Section will continue to conduct baseline studies – national assessments on the roles of men and women in fisheries. The reports either aim to identify development opportunities, or provide guidelines for management. National reports have been produced for the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tuvalu, a preliminary report for Wallis and Futuna, and state reports for Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk and Yap, FSM. In addition, information has been collected on the inshore invertebrate fishery of Niue, largely conducted by women, for inclusion in an overall inshore fisheries management plan. Baseline studies are of particular use to fisheries, environment and women's agencies, development planners, donors, and researchers. In the past, the Section has worked closely with the Reef Fishery Assessment and Management Section under the ICFMap programme, collecting socio-economic data as part of resource management plans. There are plans to continue similar work under an integrated reef fisheries assessment and management programme.

Depending on staff availability, the CFS will continue to assist the Forum Fisheries Agency and Forum Secretariat in gender analysis studies of national tuna industries. The past joint reports on gender issues outline the roles of men and women in the tuna industry; identify key gender issues in the industry; identify and develop strategies to overcome issues with negative impacts; consider the likely gender implications of different industry development options; and identify strategies to monitor and address undesirable gender impacts of development options. The gender analysis study is one of several technical studies, which are being carried out to assist fisheries departments compile National Tuna Management Plans. The reports for the Solomon Islands, Palau and Vanuatu have been completed, with Fiji and Cook Islands in the planning process.

6.2 Workshops

The Section has conducted practical skills development workshops in a number of member countries including Tonga, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Vanuatu, Niue, Wallis and Futuna, Palau, Tuvalu and FSM. Workshops have included the topics: sustainable harvesting techniques, gear technology (rope and net work), shellcraft, primary processing of seafood (wet fish preparation), secondary processing of seafood and value added products, (salting and drying, smoking, tuna jerky, sashimi, novel recipes), marketing of seafood, small scale business skills, and conservation and management of marine resources. Workshops can be open to both men and women directly involved in fisheries activities, but have targeted mainly women to date, in response to national requests for women-in-fisheries workshops. In addition, fisheries extension workers have attended the workshops to gain skills that will enable them to conduct follow up workshops.

Follow up workshops have so far been requested for Marshall Islands and Kosrae and Yap, FSM. The section will continue to work with USP on the delivery of the fisheries training module to CETC participants and the development of training material to support this work.

6.3. *Subsistence and artisanal fisheries management programme*

Depending on national needs, one of the important aims of the CFS will is to assist national fisheries agencies in the region design management programmes to conserve and manage inshore fishery resources of island countries. The section will help to identify government support that would be of help to fishing communities to manage their fishery resources and marine environment. It will attempt to help national fisheries authorities develop strategies to motivate fishing communities to take actions and other conservation measures to protect their marine environment. The section will run national workshops to train national programme staff on how to facilitate community work and formulate village fisheries management plans.

The CFS will continue to assist American Samoa's community fisheries management programme in providing technical assistance whenever the need arises. The section has also programmed in its activities assistance to Marshall Islands in establishing its community-based management programme. Indications of similar interests from Fiji and Tuvalu have been catered in for future activities of the CFS.

6.4. *Publications and resource materials*

Information is important as a tool for providing technical advice, and as support for training. Information exchange is important in disseminating news on the activities of those involved in subsistence and artisanal fisheries. The section (with the assistance of the Fisheries Information section) has been responsible for producing the Women in Fisheries special interest group bulletin, in French and English.

The bulletin has been successful in updating readers on activities, as well as providing information on research, publications, training, and development opportunities. Eight issues of the bulletin have been completed and disseminated to fisheries departments, women's affairs departments, National Councils of Women, and others working in the fisheries sector. Two issues per year are planned for production.

Training manuals and videos provide resource materials for those who run workshops (community workers, fisheries extension officers), and those who are interested in improving their skills. To date the Section has produced 3 training manuals, one on setting up a small-scale fisheries business, and another on salting and drying seafoods and one on the community management of subsistence fisheries. All these are available in French and English.

Two videos, one on shellcraft as an income-generating venture and another on sustainable harvesting techniques in Nauru, have also been produced. As with the bulletins, the resource materials have been disseminated to fisheries departments, women's affairs departments, National Councils of Women, and have been widely used in workshops.

The section has also developed its own homepage on the SPC website — most of the section's past bulletins, reports and training manuals are available for downloading from this site (<http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Sections/Community/index.html>).

The section is currently working, in collaboration with USP, on a series of community fisheries training manuals. These were originally being developed to support the fisheries training module delivered each year to CETC participants, but have since been broadened to suit community-level fisheries training throughout the region. The titles of the manuals are as follows:

- i. Fishing
- ii. Seafood in our diet
- iii. Sea plants
- iv. Seafood spoilage and sickness
- v. Seafood handling
- vi. Seafood processing and packaging
- vii. Business Skills
- viii. Fisheries management

7. Donor support

The Government of Canada funded the section since its inception in 1991 to 1995. Since 1995, the section's main donors have been Australia and New Zealand, although it has been able to attract additional, one-off funding for specific activities from other sources. UNESCO funded a workshop in Tonga in 1996, and the French Government has funded the French translation and production of two training manuals. In 2000 the section received A\$ 185,000 (CFP units 130,000) from Australia, through AusAID, and NZ\$ 165,000 (CFP units 99,000) from New Zealand, through NZODA. For 2001, the Secretariat has received A\$ 185,000 (CFP units 130,000) from AusAID and NZ\$ 180,000 (CFP units 108,000) from New Zealand. Extra funding of US\$20,000 (CFP units 27,000) for national training in seafood harvesting, processing and marketing in 2001 has been obtained from Taiwan/Republic of China. With the new terms and conditions likely to be in place in the near future, coupled with the new salary adjustment now implemented by SPC, the ability of the CFS to carry out its obligation for the island countries will be severely affected unless the main donor countries review their contributions.

8. General comment

Most island countries at present have focussed in the development of their tuna management plans in order to guide their future domestic developments for national economic interest. Enormous energy, resources and time have been spent in trying to manage highly migratory fish stocks of the Pacific Ocean. Costly regional programmes are put in place to form part of management strategies in order to provide back-up information for needed plan of actions to manage these resources. All these energy, resources and time are expended for little value in return for Pacific Island countries compared to huge benefits in favour of the foreign partners.

On the other hand, relevant authorities have not spent adequate time in examining the importance of subsistence and artisanal fisheries. In particular, their value as everyday sources of protein to the livelihoods of many people especially those in coastal rural communities, has been overlooked or undervalued. Recent studies by SPC revealed that subsistence fisheries have always provided a much larger portion of national fish catches in island countries. The average of subsistence fish catches amongst island countries of the SPC is estimated to 83,913 metric tonne annually, with the value of about US\$ 179.9 million (Dalzell et al. 1996). This huge amount represents the extent of subsistence fisheries that are consumed at local levels by SPC island countries. With this amount source from subsistence fisheries, it is certainly an important matter for responsible authorities to accord high priority. It is for that reason that the CFS of the Coastal Fisheries Programme of SPC has introduced a new dimension in its programme activities in order to assist its island members set up national management programmes in order to motivate communities to take actions for management of subsistence fisheries and marine environment . It is therefore timely and vitally important for island countries of SPC to introduce this initiative into their national fisheries activities or it will be too late to rescue the deteriorated situation now common in the marine environment of Pacific island countries.

Appendix 1 – Activities of the Community Fisheries Section 1999 to June 2001

COUNTRY/DATES/STAFF	ACTIVITIES/TARGET GROUP	OUTPUT
National research and assessment support		
Tuvalu, January 1999 L. Lambeth (CFO)	National assessment baseline study carried out. Men and women involved in subsistence and artisanal fisheries, national govt and non govt services available to support them.	Report completed and submitted to govt. and non-govt agencies of Tuvalu through national counterparts
Wallis and Futuna, May 1999 L. Lambeth (CFO)	Preliminary baseline study carried out. Men and women involved in subsistence and artisanal fisheries, national govt and non govt services available to support them.	Report translated into French and disseminated to Wallis and Futuna.
Pohnpei , Federated States of Micronesia, Aug 1999 L. Lambeth (CFO)	National assessment baseline study carried out for Pohnpei State. Men and women involved in subsistence and artisanal fisheries, national govt and non govt services available to support them.	Field report completed and submitted to National and State counterparts and relevant govt. and non-govt agencies of Pohnpei, FSM.
Palau, November 1999 P. Tuara (CFA) L. Lambeth (CFO) G. Nelson (Forsec)	In collaboration with Forsec and FFA, assisted with a gender analysis of the tuna industry as part of the Tuna Industry Management Plan for Palau. Stakeholders and others affected by development of the tuna industry in the tuna industry.	Report completed, published and distributed as part of a joint report for Solomon Islands, Palau and Vanuatu.
Vanuatu, March 2000 L. Lambeth (CFO) G. Nelson (Forsec)	In collaboration with Forsec and FFA, assisted with a gender analysis of the tuna industry as part of the Tuna Industry Management Plan for Vanuatu. Stakeholders and others affected by development of the tuna industry in the tuna industry.	Report completed, published and distributed as part of a joint report for Solomon Islands, Palau and Vanuatu.
Kosrae, Chuuk and Yap, FSM, May 2000 L. Lambeth (CFO)	National assessment baseline study carried out in three states of FSM. Men and women involved in subsistence and artisanal fisheries, national govt and non govt services available to support them.	Three reports completed and distributed to National and State counterparts and relevant govt. and non-govt. agencies of Kosrae, Chuuk and Yap, FSM.
Niue, November 2000 L. Lambeth (CFO) Lilian-Fay Sauni (USP training attachment)	Fieldwork for Niue invertebrate fisheries completed. Women involved in the collection of invertebrates on Niue's reef flat, for inclusion in the Niue inshore fisheries management plan.	Draft report completed and waiting comment from Niue. Information compiled for production of invertebrate poster of brochure.
Samoa, December 2000 Ueta Fa'asili (CFA)	Review of Village Fisheries Management plans and fisheries by-laws in Samoa. Coastal communities and the Fisheries Division.	Draft report with series of recommendations presented to the government of Samoa.
American Samoa, January 2001 Ueta Fa'asili (CFA)	Assist in the formulation of the Community-based Fisheries Management Programme of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources.	Draft report with series of recommendations presented to the government of American Samoa.
American Samoa, April 2001 Ueta Fa'asili (CFA)	Formulate the type of Village Fisheries Management Plan deemed suitable for American Samoan village communities. Programme staff of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources were taught how to incorporate information collected from village group meetings to form part of the village fisheries management plan.	The draft Village Fisheries Management Plan was introduced to the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. Documentation on the procedure to formulate the plan and necessary notes to facilitate the write up of the plan were left with the department in both hard and electronic copies.

COUNTRY/DATES/STAFF	ACTIVITIES/TARGET GROUP	OUTPUT
Development support		
National workshops		
Palau, October 1999 L. Lambeth (CFO)	Workshop on seafood quality, preservation, marketing and marine resource management. Women involved in subsistence and artisanal fisheries activities	12 women improve their skills in processing, marketing and managing their marine resources.
Jaluit, Marshall Islands, January 2000 P. Tuara (CFA)	Workshop on processing, marketing and marine resource management. Men and women involved in subsistence and artisanal fisheries activities.	5 men and 23 women improve their skills in processing, marketing and managing their marine resources.
Pohnpei, FSM, May 2000 L. Lambeth (CFO)	Workshop on seafood handling, processing, preservation, small business, conservation and management. Women involved in small-scale fisheries businesses.	11 women improve their skills in processing, small business and fisheries management.
Tonga, July 2000 L. Lambeth (CFO)	Involvement of the CFO in the FAO National Legislative Review and Enforcement Training Workshop. Participants included international and national resource people and national stakeholders (private industry and government representatives).	Contributed to discussions on the potential of community-based fisheries management in Tonga. Paper presented on draft deepwater snapper fisheries management plan.
Tuvalu, September 2000 L. Lambeth (CFO)	Train-the-trainer workshop on seafood quality, spoilage, processing, preservation, small business, conservation and management. Community workers from each island.	12 women community workers and 1 fisheries staff improve their skills in processing, small business and fisheries management.
Kosrae, FSM, February 2001	Workshop on seafood quality, spoilage, processing, preservation, small business, conservation and management. Men and women involved in subsistence and artisanal fisheries activities.	15 men and 17 women improve their skills in processing, small business and fisheries management.
American Samoa, March 2001 Ueta Fa'asili (CFA) Eteuati Ropeti (Community Facilitator) Ulusapeti Tiitii (Community Facilitator)	Training of the programme staff of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources as community facilitators to enable them to conduct and facilitate village group meetings which are required in the process of the Community-based Fisheries Management Programme. This was the follow up of the visit in January 2001.	Seven staff of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources have been trained to become community facilitators. They have acquired the necessary skill to be able to conduct village community meetings.
Chuuk and Yap, FSM, May 2001	2 workshops on seafood quality, spoilage, processing, preservation, small business, conservation and management. Men and women involved in subsistence and artisanal fisheries activities.	35 women in Chuuk and 16 women and 4 men in Yap improve their skills in processing, small business and fisheries management.
National resource materials		
February 2000 Video production P.Tuara (CFA) Pasifika Communications Ltd (Consultants)	Nauru video on sustainable harvesting techniques that respect the marine environment. Primarily for women involved in inshore fisheries. Also for govt and ngos whose work may be of relevance to women in the fisheries sector.	Inshore fishers practice sustainable harvesting of coastal resources. Stock has a chance to replenish as techniques which encourage over-harvesting decrease.

COUNTRY/DATES/STAFF	ACTIVITIES/TARGET GROUP	OUTPUT
Regional workshops		
Nelson Polytechnic, New Zealand, April 1999 L. Lambeth (CFO) M. Blanc (FETA) Nelson Polytechnic staff	Assisting SPC Training Section with regional course on seafood business operations and management for Pacific Island women. 13 women from PNG, Tonga, FSM, Fiji, Tahiti, Tokelau, Palau, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu involved in the seafood industry.	13 women receive training in retail shop operations, marketing, fish spoilage and handling, quality, food safety, hygiene and sanitation. Follow up in country work is organised by the SPC Training Section.
SPC Community Education Training Centre Fiji, September 1999 P. Tuara (CFA) T. Chamberlain (USP Post-harvest Lecturer)	Collaborative project with CETC and USP. Following response to a questionnaire given to CETC participants in April, the first fisheries training module was delivered. Target group are CETC trainees representing the SPC member countries.	26 CETC trainees receive an introduction to fisheries, including theoretical and practical sessions on resource management, gear technology, seafood processing and preservation, handling, quality and control, marketing, and development of a community fisheries programme. Development of training material for subsequent courses.
SPC Community Education Training Centre Fiji, August 2000 L. Lambeth (CFO) T. Chamberlain (USP Post-harvest Lecturer)	Collaborative project with CETC and USP. Delivery of the second fisheries training module to CETC participants. Further development and piloting of training material.	19 CETC trainees receive an introduction to fisheries. Further development of training material for subsequent courses, now being produced as 8 separate booklets suitable for use outside the CETC context.
Regional resource materials		
Women in Fisheries Special Interest Group Newsletter L. Lambeth (CFO) bulletin (coordinator) Fisheries Information Section (production)	Information bulletin produced in collaboration with SPC Information Section. Targets women involved or interested in fisheries activities, govt and non-govt fisheries and women's agencies, community development agencies.	Two bulletins per year produced in English and French, distributed to SPC member countries and territories. Increases public awareness of the areas and activities of women's involvement in fisheries in the region.
Community fisheries management manual English version, April 2000 French version, March 2001 M. King (consultant) L. Lambeth (CFO)	Completion of Fisheries Management by Communities: a manual on promoting the management of subsistence fisheries by Pacific Island Communities. Target groups are national fisheries workers, NGOs and those involved in community development.	Increased assistance to fisheries agencies and communities in the management of their marine resources.
Seafood preservation manual reprint November 2000	Reprinting of the popular manual, Practical Methods for Preserving Seafoods in French and English. Target group is men and women involved in seafood processing and marketing.	Training material suitable for community-level use, increased knowledge of methods of preservation of seafood.
Community Fisheries Training, Pacific Series, in production T. Chamberlain (USP) L. Lambeth (CFO) with various other authors and contributors	Draft material developed for the CETC fisheries training module, further developed to fit a need in the region for community-level training material. Target groups are coastal communities, particularly women, and those involved in delivering fisheries and marine resource management training to these groups.	In collaboration with USP, 8 community training manuals to be produced on the topics covered in the course (see 6.4 for detail).
Community Fisheries Section Homepage L. Lambeth (CFO)	Maintenance of a CFS homepage on the SPC website. Most CFS publications are now available for downloading from the website. Target groups are those with access to the internet with an interest in small-scale fisheries issues.	Increased dissemination of information about women in fisheries and small-scale fisheries issues throughout the region and the world. Increased awareness of the role of women in fisheries in the Pacific.