

TWELFTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL
FISHERIES MEETING

Noumea 17 - 21 November 1980

Country Statement : Republic of Vanuatu

SUMMARY

Although the country has been involved directly or indirectly in some form of commercial fisheries for a long time (trochus, green snail and more recently Tuna), the Fisheries Department was only created in December 1978, jointly established by the then Government of the New Hebrides and UNDP.

The policy of the Republic of Vanuatu in the field of Fisheries has been defined.

Since that time, some developments have taken place, the most significant being the decision that Vanuatu should have exclusive rights for the exploration and exploitation of natural resources, animal and non-animal within a 200 miles zone to be defined later with precision, the visits of the South Pacific Commission Deep Sea Fisheries Development Project at the artisanal level, and the Aerial Radiometric Survey of Sea Surface Temperatures preliminary to the Development of industrial fisheries.

The delimitation of the Fishing Zone is in progress and at the time of writing, completion of this work is expected shortly - the drafting of organic legislation to cover the Fisheries aspects of this extension of the country's jurisdiction is also in progress.

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I. Development of Artisanal Fisheries

I.i Resource assessment

From 1st August 1974 to 28th February 1975, the South Pacific Commission Outer Reef Fisheries Project operated from a base at Lamap, Malekula.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIVISION

Form No. 1-1 (Rev. 1-1-30)

Report on the Agricultural Situation in the Republic of Haiti

HAITI

The country has been severely affected by drought and the resulting crop failure. The situation is particularly serious in the northern part of the country. The Government has taken steps to provide relief to the affected population. The United States has also provided assistance in the form of food and medical supplies.

The following information was obtained from the report of the American Consul in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, dated December 15, 1930.

The report states that the drought has been very severe and has caused a great deal of suffering among the people. The crops have failed and the people are now without food. The Government has been unable to provide enough food to meet the needs of the population. The United States has been asked to provide more food and medical supplies. The report also mentions that the situation is very serious in the northern part of the country.

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Very truly yours,
[Signature]

Enclosed for the Department are two copies of the report of the American Consul in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, dated December 15, 1930.

A number of people were trained in deep sea fishing but the use of unnecessarily sophisticated equipment and boats severely limited the effectiveness of the training course (cf. Hume 1975).

From 11 September to 8 December 1978 and from 12 February to 16 March 1979 the SPC Deep Sea Fisheries Development project has been operating from Tanna, in the south of the group, for a total of 4 months (cf. Fumalohi 1979) and achieved an average of 3.1 kg per reel/hour (including troll caught fish).

Starting in April 1979, the Fisheries Department, having obtained an 8.5 m. catamaran, made a series of experimental fishing trips to obtain background knowledge on the potential of deep living snapper resources in the group. An average of 60 kg per trip (12 hours approximately) for an average per reel/hour of 3.25 kg emerged after some 32 outings. *Pristipomoides* and *Etelis* were the main species represented in the catch.

The Department feels that, in addition to fish, crustaceans and possibly gem coral may offer opportunities for artisanal fisheries development.

Starting early in 1980, the Department had some shrimps traps made. The first series was of triangular design, (60x60x120 cm), collapsible inspired from some models seen at the ORSTOM gear store in Noumea. This type was used by Struhsaker & Aasted (1974) in Hawai, Intes (1978) in New Caledonia, Brown & King (1979) in Fiji.

The first winch used was driven through a flexible shaft from a direct power take off on the flywheel of a 25 HP outboard motor. This arrangement is not suitable for hauling heavy gear over any length of time, the flexible shaft being the weak point.

The hauler unit, directly equipped with a pulley, was then fixed on a base and belt driven with a 3 ½ HP, 4 stroke petrol engine. This arrangement proved more satisfactory and a few trials were made, leading to a change in trap type from triangular to oblong, both types having two entrances.

At this juncture, Mr. M. King of the Institute of Marine Resources, University of the South Pacific, undertook a series of preliminary fishing trials, using first the triangular traps, later an oblong type (80x80x45 cm) with two entrances.

The triangular traps were soon rejected, chiefly because their collapsible character could not be maintained with the material used for covering them, without allowing many escape holes. The oblong traps gave much better results in this respect.

Contrary to expectations, covering the traps with hessian did not make any significant difference in catches.

Mr. King's fishing trials extended from 19 to 25 April 1980, and are described in a report (King 1980).

Further fishing trials were carried out by the Fisheries Department, using an oblong type of trap with four entrances (85x85x51 cm).

Although our experience of this type of fishing is still very limited, it seems that depth and bait are the two major factors of success. Average of two kilos of shrimp per trap per night can confidently be expected provided the set is made at the right depth and with acceptable bait.

The winch gave some further trouble and had to be modified slightly but it is felt that this item of equipment is now satisfactory.

It is felt that both deep vertical lining for fish and deep trapfishing for shrimp could now be developed into profitable artisanal activities by private ventures.

Some exploration for precious coral has been carried out by CCOP SOPAC with one of ORSTOM's boats, but no one can say at this juncture whether this might become a worthwhile operation in the future.

I.ii Training at the artisanal level.

Large scale Training requires a fairly extensive staff of well qualified master fishermen, which the Department does not yet have.

Plans have been made to try and link training with the eventual installation of machines making block-ice in several strategic points in the group. The use of ice would automatically be taught "on the job" and, with the possibility of obtaining loans for the purchase of boats, gear and motors, small scale fisheries development would follow almost immediately.

Starting with the activities of the SPC Deep Sea Project in Tanna and Efate -some fourteen men were given a sound training in deep vertical lining. Eight more were trained in the same technique by the Fisheries Department in 1979, and starting in September 1980 a series of training courses have been initiated in a number of islands North of Efate.

The ice would be necessary to extend marketing of catches beyond the immediate vicinity, and over a period of days.

II. Industrial Fisheries.

There seems to be a certain potential for industrial fisheries in Vanuatu. Surface tuna resources are being surveyed and it is expected that some agreements may be signed in the near future for experimental fishing operations involving both pole and line and purse-seine vessels.

A survey of bait resources would automatically be part of such operations and it is possible that bait fishing may become an income earning activity for coastal fishermen in some places.

Several of the world's leading firms controlling large tuna fishing and canning operations have expressed interest in the country's tuna resources.

III. Development of the Fisheries Department.

The Fisheries Department is still embryonic but should become an operational unit in 1981. At the present time, assistance is sought from a number of outside organizations such as the Forum Fisheries Agency, ORSTOM, the South Pacific Commission and the University of the South Pacific to supplement and support the work of the Department.

Specific instances of such cooperation extended to the Government of Vanuatu are :

Resources Assessment

Shrimp Research

USP

Tuna Surveys

ORSTOM

Training (Artisanal)

Deep Sea Fisheries Project

SPC

Education

Two fellows are taking a
Diploma course in Tropical
Fisheries

USP

200 Mile Zone

Preliminary delimitation and
legislative aspects

FFA

Buildings are planned to house Fisheries Headquarters in Santo and a branch office in Port-Vila. Other branch offices will probably be created at a later date.

In addition to the role it plays in obtaining technical assistance for the Republic of Vanuatu, the Department of Fisheries has served, from its inception as adviser to the National Development Bank for their fisheries loans. Technical advice is freely given to any private persons wishing to launch fishing ventures.

IV. Constraints

The environment of a country in the process of gaining independence and the concomitant political turmoil are not particularly favourable to the harmonious development of a technical and administrative body dedicated to the development of Fisheries at all levels. Apart from this, the main constraints experienced during the period December 1978-September 1980 were :

- lack of suitably qualified local elements for recruitment into the Department at all levels.
- lack of traditional fisheries activity on which to base progressive action.
- lack of statistical information on what little fisheries activity existed.
- lack of suitable accommodation for the Department's services and stores.
- lack of funds and personnel for small scale development programmes.

All these constraints are gradually disappearing and it is expected that the Fisheries Department will be ready to play a considerable role in the economic development of Vanuatu in the near future.

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