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**SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION**

**TWENTY-THIRD REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES**  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 5 - 9 August 1991)

**TUVALU COUNTRY STATEMENT**

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COUNTRY STATEMENT-TUVALU

INTRODUCTION

This paper is intended to provide an outline of Tuvalu Fisheries Sector Development Activities over the last three (3) years (1988-1990). Most of the activities performed during the said period are mainly targeted at achieving the Planned Programmes set forth under the Tuvalu Fourth National Development Plan for the Fisheries Sector (1988 - 1991).

Like other countries of the South Pacific Commission, Tuvalu's 200n miles EEZ possessed the country's major assets, that is the marine resources within. Developments of these marine resources will provide the essential foundation for economic and social advancement by the country's largely subsistence population.

The Fisheries Division Extension Section promotes the development of the Artisanal Fishery through the execution of training programmes, introduction of modern fishing gears and development of suitable fishing crafts through trials being carried out.

The Fisheries Research Section undertake to carryout trials on the development of marine resources. The main priority area of activity under this section is the stock assessment and statistics programmes. This activity serves as a very important tool for Fisheries Managements.

The Fisheries Management Section involves or deals with the overall Management and Policy Matters of the Fisheries Sector. Recent major activities which involves the inputs from all the rest of the sections is the Formulation and drafting of the Development Plan for the Fisheries Sector for the next four years (Period 1992 - 1995). In addition the Review of the Overall Fisheries Sector was also undertaken in late 1990 and final work on the review was made in early 1991. The Final report of the review has been submitted for Government consideration and approval.

In all Fisheries Sectors, there is optionism for increase fishing effort and expanded fish production and total import substitution. Developing the Fishery Export Market and increase employment opportunities remains to be realistic targets, however this will be taken at slow pace considering the current level of infrastructure development that has been undertaken. With all these planned programmes, several problems have been experienced that foster delays in the immediate implementation and success of the development activities.

## PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

Several constraints remain as Major Obstruction to development activities. Such problems include:

- \* lack of Infrastructure
- \* size of the domestic market
- \* Motivation
- \* Finance
- \* Transport
- \* Fisheries resources
- \* Planning and Management
- \* Enforcement

For the Development Programmes five major strategies were pursued under DP4.

- \* Invest infrastructure to support the expansion of the activities of the Artisanal Fishermen
  - \* to investigate and negotiate export Market opportunities
  - \* Facilitate the development of a commercial outlook by the fishermen through the support of Fisheries Extension Programme.
  - \* Improve personnel resources and management power and Government's dealing with Distant Water Fishing Nations.
  - \* encourage foreign investment in Joint Venture arrangement in industrial fisheries.

## ARTISANAL FISHERIES ACTIVITIES

The objectives of the Artisanal Fisheries development are:

- a) to expand the fishery through the introduction of new fishing techniques and crafts. This resulted with an increase in catch/landings by the fishing boats
- b) Reduce the pressure on traditional fishing grounds by exploring the species of both the inshore and offshore areas.
- c) To provide employment opportunities and increase income generated from the fishing activities.

Most of the activity as currently concentrated on the mainland Funafuti with gradual increase in Vaitupu and Nukulaelae. However very slow progress is made on the rest of the outer islands. It is hope to expand this Fishery to all the islands in the near future so as to be inline with Plans of establishing Community Fishing Centres on the outer islands e.g Nanumea, Nukufetau and Vaitupu planned for 1992.

To further improve the activity of the artisanal fishermen, assistance was provided through the FAO/UNDP Fishery Support Programme, Boatbuilding Project. The Boatbuilding Expert carried out trials on constructing and evaluating a suitable raft for use in Tuvalu. The evaluation and trials carried out, looked at fuel efficiency, durability and stability, and suitable for emergency purposes when engine problem developed (i.e. craft equipped with a sail). The type of crafts evaluated are the modified version of a Kiribati 4 canoe, one man Kiribati canoe, plywood skiff and a trimaran. Report on the trial is still yet to be received.

#### EXTENSION SERVICES

Despite being handicapped by lack of manpower the Fisheries Division's Extension Section continue to carry out their Extension Programmes and outer islands activities.

The activities again mainly concentrated on the introduction of new fishing Techniques, safety at sea, basic engineering and mechanical skills, basic business and management skills and fish quality control.

Apart from actual visits paid to the Outer Islands, two training workshops for the private fishermen were conducted on Funafuti.

The Fisheries Division Extension Section, however continued to train fishermen under its Sharefishing Co-operative Scheme. The overall aim of the scheme targets mainly at semi-commercial and commercial fishing activities.

To increase the Manpower of the Extension Section, two(2) diplomate graduates were recruited to work in mid 1990 and one(1) in early 1990. It is envisaged that Extension Programmes in future will be well executed or implemented.

Aim establishing a small-scale export industry based on value-added fish products (i.e. smoked or dried savoury fish) was further supported with the attachment of the SPC Masterfisherman to the Tuvalu Fisheries Division for a six months period that started in December, 1990. The attachment was aimed at training fishermen with new fishing techniques targeted at catching yellowfin tuna. Sixteen (16) of the Sharefishermen were trained under this Programme. The Outer Island Fisheries Centres Project funded under AIDAB was further delayed indefinitely. This is due to the need for immediate marketing surveys to be carried out prior implementation of the Project. The Centres when established will provide good support to the fishing activities on the Outer Islands, whereby the Fisheries Division future Extension Programmes are aimed at.

#### RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

The USAID Pacific Island Marine Resource Project, Tuvalu component is the exploration of the Deep Bottom Snapper Resources within Tuvalu waters with an aim of developing a small export market on chilled snappers. Considerable time and effort has

been put into trying to set the Project off the ground. Currently, the PIMAR evaluation group for the Tuvalu Project component are making the final assessment of proposals submitted by two interested Companies bidding for the Project. It is anticipated that the selection of the successful contractor for the Project would be made soon. In addition several talks and correspondence have been made in having Tasu Co. Ltd of Fiji to get on the survey of the Offshore deep sea snapper stock under a joint venture agreement. This activity will be useful both to the Company and Tuvalu Government for the information/data that will be collected. Commencement of this proposed Fishing Trial would begin on 7th October, 1991 after the official signing of the MOU.

A national observer will be placed onboard the vessel to monitor the catch.

In connection with the activity a proposal has been submitted for EEC aid funding for work to be carried out on identifying offshore seamounts by satellite telemetry method. Last response received from the French expressed their willingness in having to carry out the task. However a response is still yet to be received from EEC.

The SOPAC pilot lagoon dredging/borrow pits infilling Project is already underway. Dredging work will start early next year. As the dredging will be done in the lagoon, AIDAB, SOPAC and SPREP have been approached on the biological monitoring study to accompany the SOPAC Project. This is purely due to concerns on any likely effects that may be caused to fish habitat with the lagoon, SPREP has been approached on the methodology of the study.

Data collection remains the priority activities and the most important activities. Assistance has been provided both FFA and SPC in the establishment of the Tuvalu Fisheries Database System. The system for the data of the National/Local Fleet has been established and the establishment of the System for the Foreign Fishing Vessels data still yet to be finished. To achieve more success for the system training attachment has been proposed for a Tuvalu Fisheries personnel at FFA Headquarter. The training is to be undertaken sometime before the end of the year.

The construction of FADS for deployment is still underway. More FAD materials are expected soon from New Zealand. The FADs provide a very good device for fish aggregation. This will result with increase in catch and of course good data will be available or collected. It is expected that under the Division's FAD Programmes, all the islands in the group will be covered.

#### AQUACULTURE/MARICULTURE PROGRAM

The Fisheries Research Section plays the role of implementing and monitoring all Fisheries Aquaculture and Mariculture Research Project. Recently the Manpower of the section was increased by three (3). The section is now headed by a new Peace Corp Biologist and supported by one (1) newly recruited Fisheries diplomat graduate.

The Fisheries Research staff continue to monitor growth of the giant clam (i.e. Tridacna derasa) introduced from Palau. Many problems, one is predation by snails has been identified. ACIAR has been cages was tried out. As a member of ACIAR Giant Clam project Tuvalu Fisheries Research staff continue to participate in the Workshops and Project Leader Meetings organised by the Project.

To look more into the Tuvalu Project, two scientists visit, however was mainly targeted at collecting tissue samples for genetic studies. A report on their visit is yet to be received. A survey on giant clam was made in early this year to covered all the islands with the assistance of an expert from ACIAR. Trochus introduced into Tuvalu's marine environment are growing well on the five islands. To prevent the local people from removing/gathering the animal(s) for food at its early stage of introduction a regulation was passed prohibiting the harvesting of the trochus. In addition a Poster on Trochus conservation was produced with assistance of the FAO/UNDP Fisheries Support Programme. It is estimated that the trochus will be ready for harvesting within the next five (5) years.

Further trials were carried out on the planting of seaweed (specie: Euchema). The seedling were brought in from Kiribati and trials were carried out on Funafuti and Nui on the outer island. The work was carried out with assistance of a consultant from Kiribati under funding support of the FAO/UNDP South Pacific Aquaculture Development Project.

Feasibility study visit was made by the experts from the FAO/UNDP SPADP in late 1990 on the possibility of developing milkfish culture in Tuvalu. It is expected that another visit will be made sometimes before the end of this year. Base on the recommendations put forward by the consultant, if possible, then Tuvalu Fisheries will invest in fish culturing trial (pilot) project.

Success has been achieved in arrangements made for the development of a poster of common food fish of Tuvalu. Two thousand copies of full colour print out of the poster has been made through the assistance of the FAO/UNDP Fisheries support Programme. It is hope that the posters will be sold out at a calculated price to any interested buyers.

With the assistance from SPC A feasibility survey on the possibility of culture pearl was carried out in Nukulaelae, Tuvalu. The results of the survey was not very promising, however continuous effort will put into trying to develop Pearl Culture in Tuvalu. A million dollar has been submitted to EEC for funding. No response has been received to date.

#### COMMERCIAL FISHERIES ACTIVITIES

Commercial Fisheries activities continue to be played by the NATIONAL FISHING CORPORATION OF TUVALU (NAFICOT). Currently the only commercial pole and line vessel ('Te Tautai') of the corporation is currently operating, under the SPC Tuna Tagging

Programme. The vessel is expected to be used under the Programme for another year.

The only commercial Fish Market situated on Funafuti is operated by the Corporation. The Corporation has faced a lot of problems with the running of the Fish Market. Fish landed at the Market are from the Fisheries Division boats and two (2) nine metre launches operated by NAFICOT under semi-commercial a fishing trial programme.

#### DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Fourth National Development Plan is at its final year. Many of the development programmes will continue to the next. Under the Fisheries Sector for the next Plan Period (1992-1995) the following development objectives have been proposed to be achieved during the next five year period.

- \* Ensure a continued and sustainable supply of seafood protein for the people of Tuvalu
- \* Regulate and control all fisheries on the principle of optimum utilization and long term sustainability
- \* Maximize returns from Foreign Fishing Vessels operating in the Tuvalu EEZ.
- \* Create an environment conducive to the development and growth of appropriate private sector involvement in fisheries
- \* Provide employment opportunities for Tuvalu national in the Fisheries Sector.
- \* Progressively develop appropriate and sustainable small-scale export industries based on living marine resources
- \* Ensure that development efforts benefit the people of all the islands of Tuvalu.

The objectives of the next plan are carefully selected based on the review carried out on the present situation of the Fishery Sector.

To get Government's confidence on the future development of the Fisheries Sector a Review of the Sector was made. The review was conducted by a Committee appointed by Government which consisted of the staff of Fisheries Division, NAFICOT, Planning Department, Attorney General's Office and the Business Advisory Bureau (BUDAB). The Final Report of the review detailing several recommendations has been submitted for Government consideration. It is learned that Cabinet will review the report at its next meeting in August, 1991.