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SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

TWENTY-FIFTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

(Noumea, New Caledonia 14-18 March 1994)

COUNTRY STATEMENT - TUVALU

INTRODUCTION

In 1991 the Government of Tuvalu conducted an internal review of the Fisheries Sector to define the roles of Fisheries Department and that of the National Fishing Corporation of Tuvalu, NAFICOT. The review was conducted by officials from relevant Departments within the Government including Fisheries Department and NAFICOT official. The review also identified priority areas in the Fisheries Sector that required development during the 1992-1994 Plan period.

The results of this review were incorporated into the new Development Plan, which is now called the **SECTORAL MEDIUM TERM ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME 1992-1994**. At the end of December 1991, works on the new development plan were completed and the text was ready for use in early 1992. At the same time, the 1987- 1991 Fourth Development Plan came to an end as well.

Under the current Sectoral Medium Term Economic Framework Programme, Fisheries Sector's Development Objectives are:

- maintain a regular and sustainable supply of healthy seafood protein for the entire population;
- maximising returns from Foreign Fishing Vessels (FFVs) operating in its EEZ, both in terms of revenue and employment;
- the development of the domestic catching-sector on a commercial basis, beginning with the creation of a nucleus of professional commercial fishermen within Funafuti;

- the progressive development of appropriate and sustainable small scale export industries;
- the activation of a comprehensive fisheries development programme for outer-Islands;
- to enhance and consolidate Fisheries Department's planning and management capacity and technical expertise to increase and expand the extension and support services provided to subsistence and artisanal fishermen.

Presently, the two Institutions are concentrating on their scope of responsibilities in which Fisheries Department is fully responsible for the Research and the Extension works, while NAFICOT responsible for the commercial aspects of the Fisheries Sector.

This paper will cover mostly the Development Programmes executed by the Fisheries Department since 1991. up to date. The programmes are discussed below.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

1. Construction of the Boat slipping Area

In 1991 works on the construction of the Boat slipping began and also completed in the same year. The construction works was conducted by the Public Work Department and was funded by USAID. The total project cost was US\$45,000.

2. Vaitupu Community Fishing Centre

Construction works on the Vaitupu Community Fishing Centre commenced in early 1992 and completed in November of the same year. In December 1992, the centre was dedicated and officially opened to the public. The centre was constructed by a Japanese Contractor (Dai Nippon Construction Company) and was fully funded by the Government of Japan. Unfortunately the jetty that was constructed together with the centre was completely destroyed by hurricane Nina just after its dedication.

The Centre became operational in February 1993 and it is managed by four staff; two of them are permanent, the other two are casual. To date the centre is operating very well despite the many problems it encountered during the year. A review of the operation of the centre will be made at the end of this year on its viability if its management has to be transferred to the Vaitupu Island Council.

3. Ice Making Machine

In late 1993 Fisheries Department installed a new Ice Making Machine in support of the Tuvalu Deep-water Snapper Project under the Pacific Islands Marine Resource Project funded by USAID. The machine was purchased from Tuvalu Economic Development Treaty Funds.

The machine is now providing the said project with the required amount of ice flakes. Local fishermen and the general public are also benefiting from the ice flakes produced by the machine.

4. Maritime Surveillance and Communication Network

In September 1992 two FFA officials installed the Maritime Surveillance and Communication Network in the Fisheries Department. After its installation the Department's communication with FFA on Surveillance matters has been made possible. The Network will be soon transferred to the newly completed Surveillance centre right in the center of town. The centre will be operated and controlled by the Police Department, while the Network will be operated by the Fisheries Department. Both of these facilities are donated by the Government of Australia.

5. Peacesat Network

In 1993 one of the FFA staff installed the PEACESAT Network in the Fisheries Computer room in the Headquarters. The network has been a great assistance to the Fisheries Department in its communication between FFA and other Peacesat stations, without any financial implication to our Recurrent budget. Transferring of documents between Tuvalu Fisheries, FFA and other Peacesat stations can now be done without wasting any time.

FISHING FACILITIES

Presently, the major fishing facilities in Tuvalu are Canoes, motorised outboard both aluminium and plywood skiffs, and fibreglass launches. The fibreglass launches (6 launches) are owned by the Fisheries Department in 1991. In 1992 four of the small launches were officially transferred to NAFICOT Management under Cabinet's mandate to commercially used to supply its Fish Market. The four vessels still with this corporation up to date and are currently required immediate repair..

Two of the six fibreglass launches are currently operated by the Fisheries Department for research and extension activities. It has been used also to accommodates local and overseas charters to outer islands. This year the Manau, our 18.4m launch will be fully engage in fishing either under the Deep water Snapper Project or under the Fisheries Department.

To date, there are two Fish markets in the whole of Tuvalu, one on Funafuti and one on Vaitupu. Two more will be completed sometimes this year. Those are the Community Fishing centre on Nanumea and Nukufetau under AIDAB funding.

Early 1993, eight new FADs were deployed on the eight islands' coastal waters under the Deep Water Snapper Project. The FADs, according to reports from private fishermen has been productive and has provided great assistance to them in saving their time and fuel. More FADs are required to be installed on the outer islands including Funafuti.

LICENSING OF FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS

In 1991 up to 1993, Tuvalu has no bilateral access fishing agreement with Asian Distant Water Fishing Nation, except for the United States multilateral Treaty on Fisheries.

This year Tuvalu has successfully concluded its bilateral access fishing agreement with Japan and Taiwan, and may be with Korea later on in the year. With the Taiwan fifteen vessels were agreed on to be licensed to fish our 200nm Exclusive Economic Zone, and with Japan only ten.

EXTENSION PROGRAMME

Fisheries Department continues to provide its extension services to the outer island fishermen through its extension trainings. Every year a team of Extension officer travelled to the outer islands to conduct training on Modern Fishing Gear Technology, coastal navigation, boat handling, safety at sea, Book keeping, Net mending, fish handling and processing, boat maintenance and repair, and engine maintenance and repair.

One of its tasks is to oversee the operation of the Vaitupu Community Fishing Centre, to make sure that the centre is operating efficiently and in accordance to its objectives. It also responsible for the construction and deployment of FADs and regularly monitor their performance and existence.

RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

1. Deep Water Snapper Project

The project came into effect in late 1991 and began its research cruises in 1992. Most of its research cruises executed by the Fisheries Research and Extension vessel, Te Manau. The vessel was partially utilised by the project and Fisheries Department on a two week basis. The required research cruises under the project were no completed due continued adverse weather conditions, repeated engine mechanical problems, and inavailability of engine spare parts locally. All engine spare parts come from Japan.

A second vessel ,TASU I, is now executing the remaining research cruises before it embarked on commercial Fishing trials. Plans for the vessel to do its transshipment or off loading in Lautoka will have to delay until the Government of the Republic of Fiji approve and sign the MOU on Fish Landing right of Tuvalu fish to Fiji.

This year the project has made two shipments to Hawaii and their results are very encouraging. More marketing trials in Hawaii will be made in the future before the project to its end. An economic evaluation on these marketing trials will be made before September 1994.

At the end of the project a Management Plan for the exploitation and conservation of these resources would be made and presented to the Government of Tuvalu for use, as a guide in its future development of these resources.

2. Other Projects

Other Fisheries Research Projects include Boat and canoe survey, Trochus culture, Giant clam culture, Ciguatera monitoring, are ongoing programmes.

With Boat and Canoe survey, we have been facing difficulty in maintaining the programme since the resignation of the former Fisheries Statistician couple with the shortage of research staff. At its present status, the programme is really need statistical technical assistance from SPC to revive it and also to provide on the job training for our research staff on the programme itself.

With Trochus culture, Fisheries Department, since the transplantation of Trochus on Funafuti, Nukufetau, Nukulaelae, Nanumea, and Nui, has not undertaken any detailed survey and study on the survival of the animal. This year the Research section will be conducting detailed surveys on the Funafuti, Nukufetau and Nukulaelae Trochus. Nanumea and Nui will be covered later on. Currently, a number of people on Funafuti have reported that they have seen small and adult Trochus at night where they did their night spear fishing.

Out of the one thousand baby giant clams that were imported from Palau in 1988, only one hundred and thirty individuals managed to survive to this time. The animals' sizes ranges from 14 to 20 inches in length. No sign of spawning has been observed so far yet.

In 1989 an out break of Ciguatera occurred in one of the outer islands of Tuvalu (Niutao) and a reasonable number of people victimised by this fish poisoning. All species of reef fish in the surrounding were found poisonous for human consumption. Pelagic fish resources are the only resources that the inhabitants of the island relied on. To date, the situation is getting better and level of Ciguateric poisoning is also getting low. Because of this, Fisheries this year established a Ciguatera Monitoring Programme with the technical assistance offered by Dr. U. Kally, of the University Townsville. The programme was fully funded by the government of New Zealand.

In 1991, two Seaweed planting trials were carried out in Nui Island but both were not successful due to adverse weather and unsuitable environmental conditions.

INSHORE RESOURCES ASSESSEMENT NEEDS

Tuvalu for the last two years has been approached by number of overseas businessmen who are interested in the exploitation of some of its inshore resources, especially beehedermer (sea cucumber), reef fish, aquarium fish, etc. Presently, Fisheries Department does not have all the information on the abundancy of these resources and therefore request for the assistance of SPC and FFA in conducting inshore resources assessment survey in all the islands of Tuvalu in the near future.

CONCLUSION

With the limited marine resources that we have within our inshore and offshore fisheries, Tuvalu as an independent small nation will endeavour and exert all its effort coupled with the technical assistance from SPC, FFA and other donor countries and organisations will enable the development of these resources to some extend to meet local and export demands in the near future.