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SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

TWENTY-FOURTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 3-7 August 1992)

COUNTRY STATEMENT

TOKELAU

Introduction

Tokelau comprises three small atolls, made up of low lying islets of varying sizes, with a total land area of 12.2 square kilometres. The soil is generally infertile, made up mostly of coral rubble and sand.

The fishery resources of the Tokelau islands are of great importance to the 1600 residents. Since they are the major source of protein food available to the residents, the people are making extensive use of the resources in both the lagoon and the immediate surrounding ocean.

The administration of fisheries in Tokelau is under the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries in collaboration with the Council of Elders.

Trochus

Trochus niloticus was transplanted in Fakaofu from Fiji and Cook Islands in 1986 and 1987 respectively. In 1989, *T. niloticus* was then introduced to the other two atolls, Atafu and Nukunonu.

Recent observations showed that the transplantation operation on Fakaofu has been successful, as juvenile trochus could be found in many places. On Atafu and Nukunonu (the latest transplantation site), it is too early to determine whether the transplantation is successful although evaluation surveys have been conducted.

Both the Department and the communities are monitoring this project very closely, and it is hoped that another evaluation survey will be conducted on all the three atolls late this year or early next year to determine the situation.

Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)

Since 1982, several FADs have been deployed around Tokelau waters. However, these FADs no longer exist, the latest FAD being lost in late June 1992. The department is now hoping to deploy another seven (7) FADs in the next two years.

Fish processing Project

The Fish Processing Project (Kileva Fisheries) in Atafu is proceeding well, with the establishment of a market at Auckland Airport. The South Pacific Commission, through their Post-harvest Fisheries Adviser, has been very encouraging by providing technical assistance in production and marketing.

Due to the social context and the implication the project is bringing to the community, there has been some problems with the supplying of raw yellowfin tuna for the project. To eliminate this problem, the department is currently working on a vertical longline, and is hoping to have this vertical longline on trial by the end of August 1992.

Giant clams

A ban on the harvesting of clams for export was introduced by the Council of Elders as a response to large quantities of *Tridacna maxima* and *T. squamosa* being exported overseas.

After an evaluation survey in 1989 to determine the population of clams in Tokelau, it was recommended that a site on each of the three atolls be conserved for nursery purposes. This recommendation has been fulfilled on all three atolls, and seems to be stabilizing.

Fishing gear stores

The establishment of fishing gear stores on each of the three atolls has provided fishermen with easy access to common gears.

Fish poisoning

Fishing poisoning (ciguatoxin) has been reported largely from a particular area of reef at Atafu. Poisoning does not occur at regular or predictable intervals but as many as 10 cases can occur within a short period, usually two to three months and at no specific time of the year. In other years no fish poisoning is recorded. Fish poisoning is locally a major concern and requires investigation.
