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TWENTY-SIXTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES (Noumea, New Caledonia, 5 - 9 August 1996)

COUNTRY STATEMENT

GUAM

The Fisheries of Guam can be divided into two categories, 1) large-scale industrial tuna fisheries which use Guam as a base of operations and supply, and 2) smaller scale nearshore and reef fisheries participated in primarily by island residents.

Large-Scale Fisheries

Longlining by vessels from Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea is the principal large-scale tuna fishery using Guam as a base of operations. Approximately 450 vessels are involved in this fishery. The fishing grounds for these vessels are in the waters of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Belau, and international waters within fishing range of Guam. Target species are yellowfin and bigeye tuna, more than 12 thousands metric tons are landed in Guam annually. All of the catch which is of sufficient quality is air-shipped to Japan for the fresh fish (sashimi) market. The value of the annual harvest transshipped through Guam is approximately US\$ 83 million, and the annual port-of-call expenditures for these vessels on Guam is approximately US\$ 43 million. The longline industry has also stimulated the development of aquaculture production of live milkfish for bait on Guam.

Pure-seine vessels from the United States and from Japan refuel and victual at the Commercial Port in Guam. Annual port-of-call expenditures by these vessels is estimated at US\$ 156 million. The off-loading and transshipment of the catch of these vessels occurs at Tinian in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands rather than at the port of Guam because of U.S. immigration laws and laws controlling coastal navigation.

Smaller-Scale Fisheries

Smaller scale fisheries on Guam are both recreational and commercial. Recreational fisheries include a range of reef fishing methods (net, spears, hook-and-line) and near-shore boat fishing (bottomfishing and trolling). In many cases, recreational fishermen sell their catch when it is in excess of their needs, and so are not clearly demarked from commercial fishermen. A growing fishery sector is charterboat fishing. Both tourists and Guam residents participate in charterboat fishing. Trolling for nearshore pelagic fishes, especially around fish aggregation devices (FADs), is the principal method used. Half-day trips are standard, and at busy times, charterboat operators can take out two charters a day.

New Developments

The Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources has developed a revised set of fishing regulations for fishing activities within territorial waters. Included in these regulations is provision for the establishment of several marine preserves where harvesting will be controlled. These new regulations are currently going through the legislative process.

The Guam FAD program, also carried out by the Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources, is proceeding apace. Eleven of the planned 12 FADs have been deployed around the island.
