

**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

**SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION**

**TWENTY-FIFTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES  
(NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA, 14th to 18 th MARCH 1994)**

**COUNTRY STATEMENT**

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

## Overview

Fishery development in Papua New Guinea (PNG) over the last three years has come under a lot of rethinking in light of global issues such as sustainable development and integrated coastal zone management concepts. Past Department of Fisheries Marine Resources (DFMR) coastal fisheries projects such as the Provincial Fisheries Buying Centres were a case in point. Initially these provincial buying facilities were set up to promote fishing as employer rather than employee of last resort but sustained fishing has not happened within and amongst coastal communities. Fishing technology transfer did occur with little integration of fishing as a viable option within local infrastructure and social organization.

In the subsistence sector of inland fisheries, fisherfolks of specific areas such as the Sepik and the Ramu, two areas of the 1987 to 1992 fish stock enhancement programme, fishers are fishing and making a partial living on fishing. In other inland areas of the Gulf and Western provinces subsistence fishing continues. However, the majority of inland waters still lack substantive native fish fauna. The promotion of subsistence fishing leading to artisanal fisheries by the DFMR will in the future require an integration of local and contemporary fishery development and management concepts in its implementation including a more sensitive appraisal of the costs and benefits of fishing in both the coastal and inland areas over other social and economic activities.

The commercial sector comprising the Tuna, Prawn, Lobster, Barramundi, Beche-de-mer, Shark, Live Reef Fish Fishing and Trout farming in the highlands have invariably existed for a longer time. DFMR has direct control over these and determine fishing effort levels in these fisheries (except for Trout). These fisheries have matured and reached sustainable levels.

Government administration of the Fisheries sector within the past twelve months has proposed several new initiatives to revitalize the Papua New Guinea Fisheries Sector (PNGFS). These new initiatives and proposals relate to a new Policy and Programmes Document; a submission of Revised Laws and Regulations and a Proposal to corporatize the Fisheries Department and replace it with a Fisheries Authority.

## SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS

PNG has concluded an agreement in May 1992 with the Z-fishing group of the United States of America to build a Tuna cannery at Madang, on the Northeastern coast of the New Guinea mainland. Potential spin-off benefits include the licencing of national companies to supply the cannery and onshore cold storage and victualling facilities for domestic boats. In March of 1993, DFMR extended the inland fisheries stock enhancement project to stock mid-altitude (> 1000 m above sea level ) streams with a financial backing of PNGK1.2 million ( @PNGK1=US\$1.05) over the next three years. The project was stalled in June 1993 over the Quarantine and Fish Import jurisdiction conflict between the DFMR and the Department of Agriculture and

Livestock (DAL). However, legal instruments are now in place to enable DFMR to proceed with this project. Another major investment by the DFMR is the PNGK900,000.00 Aquaculture development centre in the highlands to supply carp fingerlings to local farmers. This project has been under-supplying farmers with fingerlings due to non-commercial fingerling production methods. Plans are being outlined and discussed to change the present management and make the project work. Some new developmental projects are being formulated for possible funding under a loan to be negotiated with the Asian Development Bank. The project loan would be in the order of PNGK15 million over the period 1995 to year 2000. To prepare the Department in this undertaking, technical assistance from the ADB is scheduled for April 1994 to assist in institutional strengthening of national fisheries staff. National staff would be taught by the ADB team in project formulation, preparation, appraisal and implementation techniques. This project has a concurrent environmental funded sector to undertake environmental impact studies on the final DFMR projects to be funded. PNG will be seeking through the ADB loan an extension of the DFMR/SPC funded tuna longlining work in PNG's East New Britain Province. In the fisheries surveillance aspect of the DFMR, a feasibility study is being conducted to set up a National Surveillance Centre in conjunction with the PNG Defence Force to upgrade surveillance capacity.

A major initiative over the last two years is the national awareness created by the much talked about global issues such as sustainable development and integrated coastal zone management. Whilst the Department's fundamental principle in fishery development and management is sustainable resource utilization, much of our early coastal fisheries programmes in the provinces suffered from a lack of integration within coastal community systems leading to unsustainability of the programmes. A step forward has been sparked off by the 1993 Coastal Zone Management workshop organized by the DFMR, Department of Environment and Conservation and Green Peace. This workshop brought together resource owners, users and managers of coastal resources from around PNG to discuss common grounds issues in the use of coastal resources and plan for more linkages in all sectors using coastal systems.

## STATUS OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY

Of the commercial fisheries, the Tuna industry has been largely foreign-based and owned. Changes in policy over the last three years has instituted reforms to domesticate all major industrial operations such as facilitating local ownership of tuna fishing vessels and shore-based facilities such as cannaries, processing plants and storage, fuelling and victualling capacities etc. The Torres Straits fisheries for the Tropical Rock Lobster, Prawns, and Beche-de-mer are wholly fished by PNG fishermen. The 1993 catches in the Lobster fisheries in 1993 are 70 mt and 40 mt respectively. There is a one year ban on Beche-de-mer fishing in the Torres Straits during 1993 to allow stock recovery and research into the nature of management measures to be taken. It is expected that this ban will continue for another year. A catch of 900mt was landed from the Gulf of Papua prawn fishery. This fishery has been in existence for well over twenty years. Management measures in this fishery restricts fishing effort to about 13 boats annually which the DFMR perserveres to maintain.

Aquaculture development in PNG is restricted to the Highlands Provinces of the country. At least three private commercial trout farms are operating. These facilities import rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) eggs from Tasmania, Australia. The DFMR has two aquaculture projects, the Highlands Carp fingerling centre in the Eastern highlands and the mid altitude fish stock enhancement project.