

**Secretariat of the Pacific Community**

**4th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting**

*(Noumea, New Caledonia, 30 August – 3 September 2004)*

**Working Paper 2**

Original: English

**SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting  
Draft Terms of Reference**

**Marine Resources Division  
Secretariat of the Pacific Community  
Noumea, New Caledonia**

[www.spc.int/mrd](http://www.spc.int/mrd)



## Introduction

Output 1 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting was:

*“1) SPC member country and territory representatives at HoF3 agreed that the Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat and advice from member countries and territories as necessary, should draft a set of Terms of Reference to guide the operation of future SPC Heads of Fisheries Meetings. This draft would be finalised for approval by the 4th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting and would include:*

- a) Definition of the scope and purpose of the meeting, but one that would not limit the potential for discussion, should HoF desire it, on any issue under the purview of national and territorial fisheries administrations;*
- b) The principle that presentations should be minimised and discussion time maximised, and a general guideline to keep most presentations to less than 20 minutes for maximum impact and effectiveness,*
- c) The authority of each HoF session to approve its own agenda and list of papers to be heard or considered; and*
- d) A requirement that working papers should be made available to representatives at least two weeks in advance of each meeting.”*

The current Chair of HoF (Nauru) and the Secretariat have collaborated to produce the draft in Annex 1.

HoF4 is invited to **discuss** the draft and **approve, with amendments as necessary**, a set of Terms of Reference for future Heads of Fisheries Meetings.

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## *Annex 1*

### **Draft Terms of Reference for the SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting**

1. These terms of reference are made by the SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting for the guidance of future meetings.
2. The intention of these Terms of Reference is not to be prescriptive, nor to limit the potential scope of discussion by future meetings within the purview of national and territorial fisheries administrations, but to provide a basic framework that will enable continuity between meetings, and define a common understanding of the obligations of the Secretariat and participants:

#### **Purposes of the SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting:**

3. The purposes of the SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting are to:
  - a) provide a forum for discussion<sup>1</sup> between SPC members of issues under the purview of national and territorial fisheries<sup>2</sup> administrations, particularly those issues not subject to discussion in other regional fora;
  - b) provide a bilingual interface for dialogue between Pacific Island countries and territories<sup>3</sup> on fisheries issues of common interest;
  - c) provide guidance to SPC fisheries work programmes by generally communicating areas of national and territorial activity, interest, and priority, and specifically commenting on Secretariat plans and activities;
  - d) agree any regional fisheries issues or priorities for conveyance, as necessary, for the attention of other organisations and SPC governing processes.

#### **Convention of the meeting**

4. HoF is a meeting of representatives of SPC member country and territory fisheries administrations, but CROP<sup>4</sup> and other organisations which work on issues of relevance to Pacific Island fisheries administrations are also welcome to contribute expertise and opinions to the discussion.
5. The Secretariat for the Meeting is the SPC Marine Resources Division

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<sup>1</sup> Although the word “political” is not precisely defined, it should be noted that SPC is constituted as a non-political organisation, and fora may exist in other organisations for such discussions. It should however also be noted that the discussion of issues that some may deem “political” would not infringe on the SPC constitution, provided that no political decision is made by the meeting;

<sup>2</sup> It should be particularly noted that the “fisheries” sector includes both fisheries and aquaculture;

<sup>3</sup> Note: SPC has 11 members (10 from 2005 onwards) that are not Pacific Islands Forum members, and four of these members do not have English as an official language;

<sup>4</sup> CROP is the Council of (intergovernmental) Regional Organisations in the Pacific and includes the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the University of the South Pacific (USP), the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS);

6. The venue for the meeting will normally be SPC Headquarters in New Caledonia, in order to avoid adding the cost of venue-hire and travel of interpreters, translators, and other members of the Secretariat to the cost of the meeting. However, the meeting may be held in any SPC member country or territory if these additional costs are covered.

7. Each meeting will approve its own Chair. The Chair of SPC fisheries meetings has rotated alphabetically between SPC members in series from the first SPC Regional Fisheries Conference in 1952, through 26 Regional Technical Meetings on Fisheries, to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heads of Fisheries Meeting in 2003 and this rotation will continue to be the norm. However, the rotation may be interrupted if any member offers to provide the venue, and incremental costs, for the meeting. At any venue other than the SPC Secretariat, the host will normally provide the chair.

8. Attendance by national and territorial fisheries representatives at the meeting is entirely voluntary. However, provided budgetary provision is made by the SPC Governing Council either from SPC assessed contributions<sup>5</sup> or from programme funding or special projects, travel costs or part thereof will be provided to enable the attendance of one representative from each island member country and territory to the meeting. The travel costs of the Chair of the meeting will be additionally funded.

9. In the interest of maintaining regional dialogue on regional fisheries issues that are not covered by other regional meetings, particularly coastal fisheries and aquaculture, the meeting will endeavour to convene annually. This shall be on a date that takes into account the convention of other meetings involving SPC member fisheries representatives and minimises inconvenience to the greatest possible number of members. In recent years, the traditional date for the meeting has been in August – a date which minimises interference with the other main regional fisheries body: the Forum Fisheries Committee meeting, in May.

### **Operating guidelines**

10. Each HoF meeting will agree its own agenda and any presentations to be heard at the meeting.

11. A basic principle underlying the meeting is to maximise discussion and to minimise the number of agenda items and length of presentations. As a general guideline, individual presentations should each be less than 20 minutes in duration and be clearly relevant to the business of the meeting or the interests of the fisheries sector in the Pacific Islands.

12. Although HoF is a meeting of SPC member fisheries administrations, there is no formal restriction on the presence or speaking rights of any organisation. If any issues do require more restricted discussion, under exceptional circumstances a closed session may be convened by the Chair, or an autonomous subgroup may be convened outside the meeting to report either to HoF or to other processes as appropriate.

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<sup>5</sup> It may be noted that current practice of the SPC Governing Council is for funding from SPC assessed contributions to be provided for the convention of designated SPC sectoral meetings every third calendar year.

13. All discussion within the main HoF meeting shall take place through the Chair.

14. Working papers will be conveyed to HoF members by internet at least two weeks before the start of the meeting, except in exceptional circumstances such as the need to incorporate material arising from events taking place just before the meeting. All other papers will be made available on the meeting website as they arise, and all written papers will be provided to members on arrival at the meeting venue.

## **Reporting**

15. The official report of the meeting will consist of a concise set of outputs, each agreed by a consensus of all representatives present at the meeting. These outputs will encapsulate the decisions and significant conclusions of the meeting, and may be for the benefit of other organisations, the international community, or the general public, as well as for the guidance of SPC. The Outputs of the meeting will be normally agreed as the final act of the meeting, but in unusual circumstances some may be agreed out of session by correspondence.

16. A record of discussion of the meeting, if required by any participant, will be provided in audio format. However, certain sessions of the meeting, particularly round-table discussions by members, may be summarised in writing and circulated after the meeting for comment and correction before any publication or release.

17. The Chair will produce a report on the meeting for the benefit of the SPC Governing Council. This report will normally be confined to issues of interest or relevance to SPC Governing Council processes, including any recommendations to the Council with significant core- or programme-budgetary implications or concerning administrative issues outside the purview of the SPC Director of Marine Resources, and will normally be presented to the Council by the Chair in person.

## **Out-of-session consultation**

18. Although HoF is not a standing committee in the same way as the Forum Fisheries Committee, and although it is usual for the Secretariat to maintain contact with SPC national and territorial fisheries representatives on a bilateral basis and for collective consultation to occur only during the Heads of Fisheries Meeting, HoF representatives may also need to collectively consult with the Secretariat and with each other from time to time. Modern technology has made regular intercommunication amongst 27 countries and territories relatively affordable, and an email list server<sup>6</sup> will be maintained at SPC for this purpose.

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<sup>6</sup> The address is currently [SPC-HOF@lyris.spc.int](mailto:SPC-HOF@lyris.spc.int). This is a closed list and only includes HoF participants and their alternates. An email sent by any member to this address will automatically be copied to all other HoF participants and the Secretariat.

**Amendment**

19. These Terms of Reference can be amended by agreement by any future SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting and are also subject to any framework provisions that are agreed by the SPC Governing Council to apply to all SPC Sectoral Meetings (such provisions currently include guidelines for the application of SPC's bilinguality policy).