

To make this *Bulletin* useful it is of the utmost importance for members of the SIG, and others who read it, to keep us informed of their activities. In particular, we urge you to supply such items as:

- details of practical programmes to include traditional management, traditional knowledge and customary law in official government resource management, enforcement and monitoring frameworks;
- details of research activities in traditional management, traditional knowledge, customary law;
- information on forthcoming events related to these topics;
- reports on conferences;

- information on and, if possible, reviews of books;
- information on, and, better yet, copies of articles, reports, ephemera (including newspaper clippings and other 'grey' literature), for listing in the *Bulletin*, for inclusion in the 'Database and Annotated Bibliography Project' (see below), for deposit in the SPC library and for inclusion in the PIMRIS database at the University of the South Pacific.
- questions and requests for information; and
- contact addresses and other relevant information about institutions and individuals who should be receiving this *Bulletin*.

Kenneth Ruddle

### **The Workshop 'People, Society and Pacific Islands Fisheries Development and Management'**

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Fishery and fishery-related activities throughout the world are carried out by members of communities that frequently have a long, sometimes pre-historical association with the resources they exploit. This is particularly true in the Pacific Islands, where the exploitation of marine resources is interwoven with aspects of local culture, tradition and knowledge that varies greatly from place to place. Frequent characteristics of the social systems that underlie fishing activities in the Pacific include: marine tenure; differential access to resources by different social groups, (clans, tribes or villages) or by members within social groups (men and women, members of different lineages); practices that preclude the exploitation of certain areas (taboos, seasonal closures); and practices that discourage the exploitation, consumption or commercial use of given species or products.

The development of fisheries in the Pacific Islands is seen as a means to provide social, economic and cultural benefits to individuals, communities, societies and nations. In order to achieve these targets, the governments of Pacific Island countries, with extensive support from aid agencies, international organisations and other benevolent bodies, each year make a considerable financial commitment to promoting fisheries development in a variety of forms.

Despite these commitments, this sector of fisheries development in the Pacific Islands has a very high failure rate and only occasionally meets with long-

term success. In particular, economic development projects intended to generate income-earning opportunities at the village level have a history of failing when the initiators of the project leave and activities are left solely in the hands of the supposed beneficiaries. In addition, conflicts frequently arise between the project executors and the supposed beneficiaries because of differing cultural values regarding marine tenure and resource ownership.

In numerous cases the failure of small-scale fisheries development projects has been attributed to a failure to take into account prevailing social circumstances and to implement development activities in a way that reinforces the goals and aspirations of the community that should draw benefit from the project.

The management of inshore fisheries is also assuming a growing importance, and receiving more attention in the region, as commercial exploitation, or increased fishing pressure due to concentrations of population, becomes more widespread. Advising and recommending on fishery management requirements and approaches is the responsibility of national government fisheries departments or equivalent agencies. However, fishery legislation and regulations intended to conserve fisheries are often inconsistent with already-established approaches to resource use and conservation. As a result, they tend to be ignored by fishermen, and, for various reasons, difficult or impossible for the government to police and enforce.

As in the case with fisheries development projects, the non-adoption by local communities of the conservation approaches that government tries to impose often reflects the fact that they contradict local perceptions of resource management needs and the procedures that are appropriate to meet those needs.

From the foregoing, there appears to be a need to:

- a) exchange country experience in the gathering and application of social information, and the successes, failures or conflicts that have resulted from applying or not applying this information;
- b) define the social and cultural considerations that need to be taken into account in devising and implementing fisheries development activities and management measures;
- c) establish guidelines for reducing the likelihood of failure or conflict in fisheries development and management activities by incorporating existing social and traditional value systems;
- d) identify actions in this subject field that national and international bodies can take to improve the success rate of fisheries development and management activities.

In response to these issues, the South Pacific Commission organised a one-day workshop on 'People, Society, and Pacific Islands Fisheries Development and Management' as part of the 23rd SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries, held in Noumea in the first week of August 1991.

The purpose of the workshop was to promote in-depth discussion of the social context in which fisheries development and management is taking place in the region, and thereby provide Pacific Island countries with information and ideas that would assist in the rational development and management of their marine resources. Workshop participants included senior Pacific Island fisheries officials and other delegates and observers attending the RTMF, as well as a number of resource persons and participants specially invited because of their relevant expertise. (The workshop received generous financial support from the International Centre for Ocean Development, as well as from the Forum Fisheries Agency and the FAO Regional Fishery Support Project).

The workshop agenda was structured as follows:

- Introduction, workshop aims and outline;

- Traditional systems of resource management and control in the 20th century - case studies worldwide;

- An overview of customary systems of marine resource management in Oceania, and ways in which these can be put to use in today's fisheries management context;

- Applying traditional knowledge of marine resources to their management;

- Developing a resource management system in Palau;

- Traditional knowledge and management of marine resources in Tokelau;

- Fisheries development in Papua New Guinea - involving the people;

- Conflict resolution in the development of the Cook Islands pearl industry;

- Other country interventions;

- Improving opportunities for women to participate in the development process;

- Fisheries as a part of integrated rural development;

- The role of extension and communication skills in fisheries development;

- Future needs in research on, and application of, traditional and social systems and knowledge in the Pacific;

- Recommendations for action in this area by national and international agencies.

Each agenda item was supported by presentations from resource persons, participants, or SPC staff, and each presentation generated considerable discussion and, in some cases, controversy. Workshop participants emphasized the great diversity of traditional fisheries management practices and associated knowledge across the Pacific Islands and concluded that most SPC member countries would benefit from comparative studies of these practices and this knowledge. They recommended that the SPC work towards sharing information on these subjects within and beyond the region, and expressed the opinion that the SPC would be an appropriate vehicle for the publication of issues that would not normally fit in the context of international publications.

The growing problems of reconciling customary law and western law were repeatedly raised. The workshop pointed out the need for a survey and review of available information on the various approaches taken by traditional cultures (within and outside the SPC region) to the integration of western laws and traditional customs.

Some larger Pacific Island nations contain many customary marine tenure systems about which little is known, and the structures and operations of such systems vary greatly within these countries. Rapid surveys of these systems are needed especially in order to determine which among them most need further more detailed studies in order to better facilitate their continued effective functioning.

Pacific Islander's knowledge of their marine environment (including such phenomena as seasonal, lunar and tide-related migrations and spawning aggregations of various food fishes) can be of exceptional value to government resource managers. This information is no longer always being transmitted effectively from generation to generation in the region. The workshop strongly supported research efforts to record traditional marine environmental knowledge, and where practical, put it to increased use in government marine resource management.

Community-based customary marine tenure and associated traditional management systems are facing a number of widespread modern pressures. The workshop strongly supported research on how traditional marine resource management systems respond to such pressures as major demographic changes, commercialisation of marine resources, aquaculture and marine resource enhancement, other coastal developments (including tourism), government marine resource management and enforcement programmes, and to the wider issues of integrated rural development and gender-specific role in fisheries.

The meeting nominated a sub-group of three participants to formulate specific recommendations to SPC for action in these areas, as follows:

- The workshop **recommended** that the Inshore Fisheries Research Programme set up a Special Interest Group on traditional marine resource management and knowledge in the SPC region to provide a focus for collection, discussion and dissemination of information on these subjects.
- The workshop also **recommended** that the Inshore Fisheries Research Project assist, in consultation with member countries and, where

appropriate, in collaboration with other regional organisations, in the design and use of customary marine tenure questionnaires building on the experience of Solomon Islands in their survey of 43 customary marine tenure systems in that country.

The information bulletin you are reading at present is the first product of the SIG that has been established in response to the first recommendation. As regards the second, the IFRP has obtained and circulated copies of the Solomon Islands questionnaire, plus the report of the survey which contains an analysis of the results obtained. The report in question is an FAO document (from the Fisheries Law Advisory Programme, Western Pacific and South China Sea Region: FL/WPSCS/87/16) entitled "Analysis of replies to a questionnaire on customary fishing rights in Solomon Islands" by Hilary Lewis Ruttley. It should be available by writing to FAO, but if you have trouble obtaining it, as we did, we can provide you with a photocopy of our not-very-good photocopy.

Many of the presentations at the workshop were very good, and as a result we are preparing a volume of workshop proceedings. Titles to be included are:

*The value today of traditional management and knowledge of coastal marine resources in Oceania* by R. E. Johannes, K. Ruddle and E. Hviding;

*Conflict resolution in the Cook Islands pearl industry* by J. Dashwood;

*Resource owners as implementing agencies of Papua New Guinea coastal marine resources management regulations* by M. R. Chapau, P. M. Lokani and C. D. Tenakenai;

*Using customary practices in marine resource and coastal management in Yap state, Federated States of Micronesia* by A. Smith;

*Traditional marine conservation in Tokelau* by F. Toloa, R. Gillett and M. Pelasio;

*Women and fishing in traditional Pacific Island cultures* by E. Matthews; and

*Contribution to a bibliography of Pacific Island traditional fishery practices* by R. Gillett, K. Ruddle, R. Johannes, M. Pelasio and E. Hviding.

The proceedings are in preparation and will be published as soon as possible, and circulated to group members when available.