

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION
TWENTY-THIRD REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 5-9 August 1991)

COUNTRY STATEMENT – FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

The Government

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a democratic constitutional federation of the four states of Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk and Yap. It came into being as a distinct political entity in 1979 and became an independent nation on November 3, 1986. Under a Compact of Free Association with the United States, the FSM is responsible for its own internal and foreign affairs, while the US has been delegated the responsibility for defense.

The (FSM) National Government, which is based in Palikir, Pohnpei and the State Governments are divided into executive, legislative and judicial branches. The President and Vice-President are elected by the FSM Congress from among its fourteen Senators, who are popularly elected to represent each state. Popularly elected Governors head each State.

Under the new administration, which took office in May 1991, fisheries development throughout the Federation was given top priority. Fisheries development agencies together with the private sector are working together to be more involved in the harvesting and processing of the abundant tuna resources in the Federation's EEZ.

Fisheries Organisations of the National Government

With the National Government, the Micronesian Maritime Authority (MMA) plays a major role in developing fisheries policies for the FSM National Government.

During the past year more than 400 vessels were licensed to fish within the FSM EEZ. Over 100 purse seiners were registered in that year and the annual catch rose to more than 155,000 metric tonnes worth more than \$US 120 million dollars.

The MMA continues to negotiate licensing arrangements that facilitate DWFN transshipment at FSM ports. Regular transshipments by Japanese and Taiwanese longliners have been carried out at Pohnpei, Yap and Chuuk. Transshipments by both countries and other flags are expected to increase substantially this year, when airfreight problems are resolved and other facilities are put into place.

The FSM National Fisheries Corporation is the business arm of the government, and was set up to commercially develop a tuna industry, enter into Joint-Venture agreements, to participate in commercial fishing projects, and to invest in the expansion and improvement of the FSM fishing industry.

The Corporation in conjunction with Yap and Chuuk have set up two companies, one in each state, which will be involved in the harvesting, processing and transshipment of fresh tuna. The construction of modern tuna longline transshipment facilities are under bid now for each state and are expected to be in operation by August 1992.

In a joint venture with Pohnpei State and an Australian partner, NFC has created the Caroline Fishing Company, which has acquired and been operating three small purse seine vessels. Future plans for the venture include the construction of cold store facilities and a processing plant.

The outer banks fishing and hydrographic survey in Yap and Chuuk has been completed. Interpretations and analysis of data from each study in final form should be available soon.

With funding assistance from the Asian Development Bank the corporation plans to acquire and operate 6 longline vessels to fish for sashimi grade tuna.

The National Marine Resources Division, which became operational in 1983, under the Department of Resources and Development, is responsible for providing technical information, training coordination, advisory services, and support for development and management activities in marine resources including fisheries, aquaculture, coastal resource management and other marine products. It coordinates daily with MMA and state agencies dealing with marine resources, and maintains liaison (through the Department of External Affairs) with foreign and international agencies concerning marine resources, for the purpose of exchanging information on opportunities for training, marketing, project funding and related matters.

The Micronesia Maritime and Fisheries Academy in Yap was officially opened in February 1990. This privately operated institute is fully supported by the national and state governments. It will provide effective education and training in maritime and fisheries technologies, at both the college and high school levels. Theoretical and practical training will be emphasised including on-board training for maximum gains and benefits.

Other National Projects

1. **FSM Aquaculture Center:** The National Aquaculture Center is set up to provide a focal point and expertise for demonstration, training, research and advisory services for all types of aquaculture in the FSM, beginning with a small hatchery and quarantine system for giant clams, trochus and green snail. Demonstration activities in giant clam rearing are on-going.
2. **Regional Fishery Statistics Project:** The FSM Marine Resources obtained local and US funding to establish a standardised, computerised fish catch data system covering local commercial and subsistence catches. The administration of the project will undergo major changes with the phasing out of the administering organisations.
3. **Turtle Stock Enhancement:** The MRD continues to seek funds to hire Micronesian part-time technicians to care for and increase survival rates of young sea turtle hatchlings and study the status of turtle stocks by tagging adults.
4. **Giant Clam Culture Regional Extension and Demonstration:** The MRD has obtained the renewal of a grant to support a giant clam extension agent (based at the Aquaculture Center in Kosrae) whose scope of services include all the US-Affiliated territories in demonstration and extension of giant clam culturing.
5. **Rabbitfish Cage Culture:** The project aims to identify the available seedstock of *Siganus* species, determine suitable pilot project sites and develop practical techniques and protocols for handling and culturing rabbitfish.

6. Sponge Growth Studies around Pohnpei: Through the work of sponge culturist Mr Richard Croft, the project sought to identify suitable sites and culturing methods for growing sponges by employing different techniques at variable sites and differing environmental conditions. Funds for training local culturists have been obtained for another year.

Other State Projects

1. Shore Facilities: Modern tuna longline facilities for Chuuk and Yap to be operated by Chuuk Fresh Tuna, Inc. and Yap Fresh Tuna, Inc. are under development and should be operational in the latter part of 1992.

2. Yap State: Yap State has acquired and is operating three small purse seine vessels, as well as a small fleet of longline vessels. In a joint arrangement with a Taiwanese company, they are also handling tuna transshipment involving some Taiwanese vessels. The arrangement has a potential of up to 30 longline vessels. Several other Okinawa vessels also operate out of Yap. Two more 14 gross ton longline vessels will join the Yap fleet from Japanese fisheries grant aid.

3. Chuuk State: Chuuk State, in a joint arrangement with a Guam-based company, has been transshipping fresh tuna to Japan using a Boeing 727-100F aircraft. Chuuk has also signed a letter of intent with the largest tuna operator in Guam for a joint operation when the transshipment facility in Chuuk is completed. Additionally, Chuuk and NFC are buying two US-type longline vessels each from a Seattle company.

4. Pohnpei State: Pohnpei is expanding its Teketik facilities to enable large scale transshipment. A tuna processing plant is also under construction and is expected to be operational in 1992. The State, in a joint arrangement with an Okinawa and a Taiwan company, have been managing the tuna transshipment operation.

5. Kosrae State: Kosrae State plans to develop a major tuna industry center which will also include a longline base. The State is considering obtaining Australian designed longline vessels. Longline trial operations in the states are already underway.
