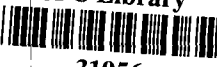


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SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

NINETEENTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 3 - 7 August 1987)

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I. OPENING ADDRESS

1. Mr Jon Jonassen, Acting Secretary-General, formally opened the meeting with an address welcoming the delegates and emphasising the Commission's long history of involvement in fisheries since the first Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries in 1952. He also stressed the importance of the critical review of SPC's fisheries programmes provided by the Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries (RTMF). Such review ensures the continued relevance and effectiveness of the fisheries services provided by the Commission.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

2. The Fisheries Adviser informed the meeting of administrative arrangements and the timetable for the meeting.

III. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND OTHER OFFICE BEARERS

3. Following the procedure adopted in the 1982 Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries of rotating the Chairmanship amongst countries in alphabetical sequence, Mr Ray Tulafono of American Samoa was appointed as Chairman. Ms Meryl Williams of Australia was appointed as Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Drafting Committee. Members appointed to the Drafting Committee included representatives from New Caledonia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Western Samoa.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

4. The revised agenda was approved as follows.

AGENDA

1. Opening address
2. Administrative arrangements
3. Appointment of Chairman and other office bearers
4. Approval of agenda and timetable
5. Report on Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme activities
6. Report on the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme technical review working group
7. Consideration of the two TBAP evaluation reports prepared for CRGA 8 by Consultants Mr T. Curtin and Messrs S.T. Cavuiliati and J. Crossland respectively
8. Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish
9. Review of Coastal Fisheries Work Programme
10. Consideration of a draft proposal for the development of a Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS)
11. SPC Inshore Fisheries Research Project
 - (i) Review of structure and activities
 - (ii) Workshop on Pacific Inshore Fisheries Resources
12. Proposal for a regional computer training course
13. Workshop: Marketing of Pacific Islands fisheries produce
14. Port Sampling Programme for Pacific Island Parties to the U.S. Multilateral Treaty - objectives and guidelines
15. Ciguatera - a regional update
16. Reports by other organisations
17. Other business
18. Adoption of the report

V. REPORT ON TUNA AND BILLFISH ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

5. Dr John Sibert, Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme Co-ordinator, introduced working paper 5. He reported that substantial progress had been made with the development and maintenance of the regional oceanic fisheries assessment data base. In excess of 80,000 records were processed last year.

6. Data coverage had improved, but is of continuing concern, particularly with respect to fishing in high seas areas. It is hoped that representation of distant-water fishing nations (DWFNs) on the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish will allow this problem to be addressed. The receipt of duplicate log-sheets is also a problem, the most practical solution being the introduction of an in-country log-sheet accounting system.

7. The TBAP's work on interaction amongst fisheries was described. The important factors affecting interaction were identified as distance between fisheries, movement rates, natural mortality and the intensity of fisheries. The major conclusion of the analysis of the Skipjack Tagging Programme was that interaction amongst fisheries in different countries is low, primarily because of low exchange rates, high natural mortality and low intensity of the fisheries.

8. A re-analysis of the skipjack tagging data using further information on the distribution of Japanese pole-and-line catch and effort would be useful to interaction studies. This may be possible through a collaborative study with Japanese scientists who could supply the necessary fishery data.

9. Further research is needed on the interaction between the surface and longline fisheries for yellowfin. This is dependent partly on the receipt of funding for a large-scale yellowfin tagging programme.

10. The assessment and monitoring of tuna stocks is based primarily on the analysis of catch and effort data. A realistic estimation of maximum sustainable yields is not appropriate because the fisheries in the region are still developing. At present the stocks appear capable of sustaining further increases in catch. The monitoring of catch rate trends and the comparison of yields per unit area with developed tuna fisheries elsewhere appear to be the best available methods of assessment.

11. Mr J. Ianelli, Fisheries Scientist, TBAP, outlined two baitfish studies carried out by the TUNA and Billfish Assessment Programme at the request of the governments of Kiribati and Fiji. This work involved an assessment of baitfish resources in those countries and the development of statistical systems to enable future studies. The work was commended by the delegates from Kiribati and Western Samoa.

12. Tuna-environment research by ORSTOM was outlined by Mr R. Pianet. The collection of various oceanographic data and their correlation with fishery catch rates were discussed. He presented data showing that parameters with substantial variation, such as surface salinity and temperature at 100 m depth, are useful to explain variation of oceanographic phenomena, and, at a later stage, catch rate variation more than surface temperature, which varies relatively little in the region described.

13. The TBAP's work on the provision of fisheries observers and advice on development of observer programmes was described. This work was carried out at the request of member governments. Assistance is being provided to Pacific Island countries which are party to the Multilateral Fisheries Treaty with the United States of America. A regional observer manual has been printed (SPC Handbook No. 27).

14. In the past year, work on monitoring the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) has been limited to a small-scale tagging project off a FAD in Kiribati.

15. The TBAP's work on providing assistance to countries in the implementation of appropriate systems to monitor artisanal and subsistence fisheries was reviewed. Programme staff have provided assistance to Solomon Islands and Tonga, and have identified a consultant to conduct work requested by Palau.

16. The TBAP Co-ordinator described assistance to countries in training fisheries biologists in quantitative fisheries methods. Within the last year, training in fisheries statistics and computer skills has been provided for Fiji and Tonga.

VI. REPORT ON THE TUNA AND BILLFISH ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME TECHNICAL REVIEW WORKING GROUP

17. The TBAP Co-ordinator introduced the report from a working group he had convened on 29 and 30 July 1987 (WP.24) and noted that discussions had covered a wide range of technical aspects. The working group felt that the most important issues were:

- (1) specifications for log-sheet accounting systems;
- (2) tuna and FADs;
- (3) in-country stock assessments;
- (4) yellowfin assessment and interaction studies; and
- (5) use of ocean "climate" information.

18. A suggestion in the report was that a special meeting be convened outside the RTMF to discuss information and research on FADs. Several delegates agreed to meet.

19. Further discussion on working paper 24 was deferred until after discussion of the consultants' reports.

VII. CONSIDERATION OF THE TWO TBAP EVALUATION REPORTS PREPARED
FOR CRGA BY CONSULTANTS MR T. CURTIN AND MESSRS S.T. CAVUILATI
AND J. CROSSLAND RESPECTIVELY

20. The Acting Secretary-General pointed out that the TBAP was chosen for review as part of the regular SPC programme evaluation and he described the two consultancies. It was noted that the first consultant, Mr T. Curtin, was unable to visit all countries due to time constraints and, therefore, that the second consultants, Messrs S.T. Cavuilati and J. Crossland, had been required to visit the remaining countries.

21. Consultant Mr T. Curtin presented his evaluation in working paper 3.

22. The general points of Mr Curtin's report and the paper prepared by the Secretariat for the seventh meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) containing comments on the report were discussed briefly. The Acting Secretary-General advised that reviews of the topics covered in Recommendations 11 and 12 of CRGA 7/WP.8 were not yet complete.

23. The report of Crossland and Cavuilati was then introduced for review.

24. Since the report of the second review had only recently been made available to delegates, Messrs Crossland and Cavuilati presented their report in detail.

25. Mr Crossland noted that the terms of reference for this second review were the same as those for the Curtin report.

26. Mr Crossland acknowledged the usefulness of the Curtin report in preparing this second phase of the review, and stated that conclusions of both reports were in general agreement.

27. The consultants recommended changes in six areas: the long-term research needs; the data base; the integration of SPC fisheries programmes; the communication, advisory and information services; staffing, management and financial issues; and assistance from countries and organisations.

28. The Acting Secretary-General briefly described the views of the Secretariat on each of the 17 specific recommendations.

29. The meeting reviewed each recommendation from the Crossland and Cavuilati report with reference to those of the Curtin report where relevant.

30. After an extensive discussion on Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Crossland/Cavuilati report (Recommendation 1 of the Curtin report), it was decided that responsibility for preparing a draft mission statement for the TBAP lay with the RTMF. The Chairman deferred further consideration of these recommendations and appointed a working group consisting of the Secretariat and delegates from American Samoa, Kiribati, France and Tuvalu to prepare a draft mission statement for later consideration in plenary session.

31. The mission statement and objectives of the TBAP as drafted by a specially appointed working group were reviewed and adopted as follows:

Mission Statement for the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme

In order to help member countries develop, manage and rationally exploit the renewable oceanic resources of the region for the long term, the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme will conduct scientific research on the stocks which support these fisheries and on the environmental factors that affect them.

Objectives of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme

The following are suggested activities to be completed during the next year grouped under the priority areas.

1. **Collection and evaluation of fisheries data and maintenance of regional oceanic fisheries assessment data base**
 - a. Acquire modern data base management software.
 - b. Implement log-sheet data base on new software.
 - c. Consult with FFA and begin collaborative joint development of a fisheries data base.
 - d. Publish tabular data summaries and maps of catch distribution in the region.
 - e. Participate in the design and evaluation of port sampling projects and analyse resulting data.
 - f. Continue attempts to increase data coverage.

2. Assessment of interaction between fisheries for oceanic species

- a. Begin field work for a collaborative in-country tagging project.
- b. Begin large-scale yellowfin tagging project.
- c. Renew attempts to collaborate with Japanese scientists on a joint analysis of Skipjack Programme tag return data and Japanese pole-and-line fisheries data.
- d. Examine length-frequency data as an indicator of potential for fisheries interaction.

3. Assessing and monitoring the levels of exploitation of stocks of commercially important tuna and billfish species

- a. Review fisheries data and begin to assess tuna stocks on sub-regional and country-specific basis.
- b. Review data holdings on billfish and albacore fisheries.

4. Studies on the biology and ecology of commercially important tuna, billfish and bait species

- a. Relate yield per unit area of fishing ground to known distribution of oceanic productivity.
- b. Correlate CPUE measures with oceanographic data.
- c. Conduct baitfish analyses if requested.

5. Provision of fisheries observers and advice on development of observer programmes

- a. Participate in the observer training courses.
- b. Conduct observer trips on longline vessels target fishing on albacore.
- c. Assist in processing observer data.

6. Monitoring the use of fish aggregation devices

- a. Conduct small-scale tagging operations in relation to FADs.
- b. Participate actively in FAD research workshop and subsequent field activities.

32. Recommendation 3 of the Crossland/Cavuillati report was noted to be similar to Recommendations 3,4 and 5 of the Curtin report in that all these recommendations concerned possible duplication in data base functions. In the discussions on these recommendations, there was considerable support for the maintenance of an appropriate data base by TBAP, especially from countries who are not Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) members.

33. With regard to the transfer of fisheries data, the SPC Secretariat reported that considerable progress had been made at the working level in co-operating with FFA. This co-operation had included regular exchanges of information.

34. Recognising the complexity of the data base initiation task, the meeting noted that FFA would require assistance from SPC. It was agreed that the specific roles of the data bases needed to be clearly defined as soon as possible. In addition, FFA and SPC member countries should consult with a view to co-ordinating the data base projects.

35. The FFA Secretariat explained that its data base project was a mandate from the Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC), at which most island countries around the table are represented. It was initiated along completely different lines from the SPC data base and was dictated by the member countries of the Forum. FFA was also mindful of duplication, and expressed the need for co-operation between the two organisations.

36. The meeting stressed that SPC continue to receive data for its research purposes keeping in mind individual country's confidentiality requirements.

37. After considering Recommendation 3 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report, the RTMF modified the original wording and made the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 1

The meeting recommended that the South Pacific Commission in close consultation with the Forum Fisheries Agency and member governments clearly define the roles of the two data bases, especially to ensure that duplication of effort in the collection and processing of tuna log-sheet data is minimised. Arrangements should ensure that data would continue to be collected in a suitable form for scientific analysis and be made available to the South Pacific Commission for that purpose. The South Pacific Commission, by offering the services of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme, should extend maximum assistance to the Forum Fisheries Agency data base project.

38. The Acting Secretary-General stated that the Secretariat had agreed in principle to Recommendation 4 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report -- the appointment of a Fisheries Co-ordinator or Fisheries Director as in Recommendation 16 of the Curtin report -- but he encouraged further comments from member countries.

39. The meeting recognised the increasing interdependence of activities between the two fisheries programmes of the SPC and identified the need to ensure that the Fisheries Co-ordinator's position resulted in improved efficiency and output, and that it did not add an unnecessary extra tier to the management structure. Some countries expressed concern that the value of the structural changes might be less than anticipated since the new structure will still have to operate within the relatively cumbersome SPC system.

40. The meeting endorsed the concept of a Fisheries Co-ordinator, responsible for all SPC activities in fisheries including the TBAP. A working group was designated to draft terms of reference for the position, but full discussion was deferred until after completion of all agenda items relating to SPC fisheries programmes.

41. Following later discussions the meeting made the following recommendation:

Recommendation No. 2

The meeting recommended that a Fisheries Co-ordinator, responsible for all South Pacific Commission activities in fisheries, including the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme, be appointed. Terms of reference should be:

- (1) to provide overall co-ordination and direction to South Pacific Commission fisheries programmes;
- (2) through on-going liaison with member countries to ensure that programmes are responsive to their needs;
- (3) to identify funding sources and assist in obtaining funding for fisheries projects;
- (4) to advise the South Pacific Commission Secretariat on fisheries matters;
- (5) to maintain contacts with other fisheries organisations.

42. With reference to Recommendation 5 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report (Recommendation 7 of the Curtin report), the transfer of priority activity 7 (collection of artisanal fisheries statistics) from the TBAP to the Inshore Fisheries Research Programme (IFRP) was approved by the 1986 RTMF. The Acting Secretary-General confirmed that the changes recommended have already been implemented by the Secretariat as an approved priority in the IFRP and no action was required.

43. The meeting discussed Recommendation 6 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report concerning the transfer of priority activity 8 (dealing with training) from the TBAP to the SPC Fisheries Training Programme.

Recommendation No. 3

The meeting agreed with the consultants' view that the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme staff would retain their involvement in the conduct of training, and recommended that responsibility for priority activity 8 (dealing with training) be transferred from the TBAP to the South Pacific Commission Fisheries Training Programme.

44. With reference to Recommendation 7 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report, the Acting Secretary-General advised that this recommendation followed the existing practice that the work programme and priority activities of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme be set by the RTMF and therefore no action was required.

45. With reference to Recommendation 8 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report (Recommendation 2 of the Curtin report), the meeting considered the formation of a scientific committee on tuna. A number of delegates considered that these recommendations were now covered by the proposal to establish the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish scheduled for discussion under agenda item 8.

46. With reference to Recommendation 9 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report (Recommendation 13 of the Curtin report) concerning SPC's publications policy, the delegates expressed their strong support, and, while noting that the entire SPC publications policy is currently under review, encouraged the Secretariat to give particular attention to the scientific publications of the TBAP. The meeting then made the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 4

The meeting recommended that the South Pacific Commission review its policy on publications of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme and permit publication of scientific results in outside journals where appropriate.

47. The meeting strongly endorsed Recommendation 10 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report, concerning the inclusion of non-technical summaries in TBAP scientific papers and made the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 5

The meeting recommended that summaries be produced in non-technical language of all major Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme scientific reports.

48. The two following recommendations were adopted, corresponding to Recommendations 11 and 12 of the Crossland/Cavuilati report and 6 and 12 of the Curtin report, concerning improvements in communications between TBAP staff and SPC member countries.

Recommendation No. 6

The meeting recommended that, following important work done on behalf of countries and publication of the report, the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme staff member responsible visit the country concerned to discuss the results with government officials.

Recommendation No. 7

The meeting recommended that the South Pacific Commission Fisheries Co-ordinator make regular visits to member countries to ascertain their needs and discuss ways in which the Commission's fisheries programmes can assist them.

49. With reference to Recommendation 13 of the Crossland/Cavuilati report concerning Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme staffing requirements, the meeting made the following recommendation with instruction to the Secretariat to inform the next RTMF of progress.

Recommendation No. 8

The meeting recommended that the staffing requirements of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme be reviewed, taking into account planned future activities and any reorganisation of the South Pacific Commission's fisheries projects as a whole. In this review, new job descriptions should be prepared for each post relating each of them to the priority activities of the TBAP.

50. The Secretariat then reminded the meeting that the staffing situation had already improved with the recruitment of the senior scientist and statistician and that an offer had been made for the assistant statistician.

51. With respect to Recommendation 14 of the Crossland/Cavuilati report and in recognition of the problems caused by the relatively high turnover of Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme staff, the meeting made the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 9

The meeting recommended that consideration be given to appointing Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme staff on contracts of three years.

52. With respect to Recommendation 15 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report (similar to Recommendation 18 of the Curtin report) concerning attachment fellowships to the TBAP, the meeting made the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 10

The meeting recommended that provision of funds for attachment fellowships to the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme be made as a regular part of the budget.

53. With respect to Recommendation 16 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report concerning core-funding of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme, the meeting made the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 11

The meeting recommended that sufficient funds be allocated from the South Pacific Commission's budget to meet the cost of the core functions of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme for its scheduled duration.

54. With respect to Recommendation 17 of the Crossland/Cavuiliati report (Recommendation 12 of the Curtin report) concerning re-allocation of funds to permit increased travel by TBAP staff, the meeting made the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 12

The meeting strongly recommended that increased funds be allocated within the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme's budget for travel by Programme staff.

55. With reference to Recommendation 8 of the Curtin report concerning stock assessment methods, other than those using log-sheet data, the meeting agreed that this issue would be best dealt with by the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish.

56. With reference to Recommendation 9 of the Curtin report concerning data coverage, the meeting decided that this issue also falls within the terms of reference of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish.

VIII. STANDING COMMITTEE ON TUNA AND BILLFISH

57. The meeting emphasised that the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB) should consist of a small number of specialists but that flexibility should be allowed in its composition to accommodate both member country and committee needs.

58. Mr U. Fa'asili of Western Samoa, Chairman of the working group on the SCTB, then reviewed the outcome of the discussions outlined in the Report of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish Working Group. The meeting was reminded that the establishment of the SCTB was approved in principle by CRGA 4 and that the decision relates only to the terms of reference and the composition.

59. The meeting endorsed the terms of reference and composition of the SCTB as presented in the working group's report, noting that this report had been developed by many of the RTMF delegates who also attended the working group meeting on 31 July 1987. The terms of reference and composition of the SCTB as agreed are as follows.

Terms of Reference of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish

The intended role of this Committee is purely advisory and consultative. Its work will assist in the conduct of pelagic fisheries research through the provision of expertise, information and technical advice.

The Committee shall advise the Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries on biological research on stocks which support oceanic fisheries for tuna and billfish in the SPC region by:

- (i) assisting with the rigorous scientific review of the work of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme and suggesting improvements to the scope and techniques of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme's research;
- (ii) assisting with and advising on the acquisition of relevant data to the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme, specifically that relating to fishing activities on the high seas surrounding the EEZs of South Pacific Commission member countries;
- (iii) arranging collaboration between South Pacific Commission staff and outside workers on problems of mutual interest.

Composition of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish

It is expected that the composition of the Committee would vary according to the specific tasks before it. In general, however, it shall consist of the following members:

- (i) Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme Co-ordinator or his representative;
- (ii) A representative from the Forum Fisheries Agency;
- (iii) Scientists from countries with a commitment to tuna fishing in the South Pacific Commission region, specifically including both Island states and distant water fishing nations;
- (iv) Technical experts invited by the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme Co-ordinator as necessary to assist in analysis of specific problems.

IX. REVIEW OF COASTAL FISHERIES WORK PROGRAMME

60. The activities of the Coastal Fisheries Work Programme for the year was outlined by the Fisheries Adviser, Mr Bernard Smith, as laid out in working paper 7.

61. Master Fisherman, Mr L. Chapman, reviewed his work in New Caledonia, Fiji, Cook Islands and French Polynesia.

62. Master Fisherman, Mr P. Mead, summarised his work in Vava'u, Tonga, for the Fishing Gear Development Sub-project.

63. The Fisheries Adviser expressed his thanks for the outstanding support given by the Tongan Government while the FGD Sub-project continues to be based at Vava'u. The representative of Tonga stated his appreciation of the opportunity given by SPC and member countries for this project to be located in Tonga and expressed continued willingness to host the project if an alternative venue could not be found.

64. The representative of Kiribati indicated the interest of the Kiribati Fisheries Division in hosting a similar project when this phase of the project ends in late 1988. The Fisheries Adviser welcomed the interest shown by Kiribati and indicated his support for such a request.

65. The Fisheries Adviser reported that considerable progress had been made in clearing the backlog of Deep Sea Fisheries Development (DSFD) Project reports. This task should be completed by the end of the year.
66. The preliminary analysis of DSFD Project data will be carried out in the first quarter of 1988 with the collaboration of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Honolulu.
67. The Fisheries Adviser reported on progress of the Fish Handling and Processing Project and the Regional Fisheries Training Project. He noted that a computer awareness class could be introduced to future SPC/Nelson Polytechnic training courses.
68. Several delegates expressed their thanks for the opportunity of sending students to the SPC/Nelson Polytechnic training course and noted the resulting successful performance of these officers on their return. The representative of Palau expressed interest in hosting the practical course. The representative of Tonga also expressed continued willingness to host the practical module of the Nelson course, if an alternative venue could not be found.
69. The Fisheries Adviser thanked the Cook Islands for its support in hosting the refrigeration course from June to October 1986, and the support given by the FAO/UNDP South Pacific Regional Fisheries Development Programme for this joint venture. It was reported that a third refrigeration course had recently started in Papua New Guinea.
70. The representative of Western Samoa, following the reporting on the various courses, requested that any significant problems with organising and running the courses also be reported in future.
71. The representative of Tonga expressed his appreciation of the training programme and thanked SPC and donors for their work and support. The follow-up visit to the refrigeration course trainees was much appreciated. General comments were also made about the problems experienced in obtaining funds for long-term higher level/academic training, and concern was expressed with the practical component of the USP Fishing Diploma, also discussed at the FFC, Suva, about the need for co-ordination of the contents of the course.
72. The meeting expressed its appreciation of the progress made with the Regional Fisheries Training Project in such a short time, and wished to commend the project and its Training Officer, Mr Alastair Robertson, for its achievements.
73. Mr Garry Preston, Assistant Fisheries Officer, reported on the deep-water shrimp research conducted in Kiribati by consultant fisherman Mr Bernard Crutz and himself.

74. The delegate from Kiribati expressed his appreciation of the research work, which will be followed up by the Kiribati Fisheries Division.

75. The representative of Tuvalu expressed his concern that at no time during the year did an SPC Fisheries representative visit Tuvalu. The Fisheries Adviser stated that this would be rectified in the very near future.

X. CONSIDERATION OF A DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
PACIFIC ISLANDS MARINE RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM (PIMRIS)

76. This item was opened by a presentation by the two consultants, Mr Ueta Fa'asili and Mrs Esther Williams, who had recently completed a study of Pacific Island marine resources information needs. The study had been commissioned as a result of a joint FFA/SPC/USP-sponsored meeting of fisheries officers, librarians and information specialists held at SPC headquarters in March 1987 (USP/SPC/FFA Fisheries Information and Advisory Group Meeting). This meeting had itself resulted from a growing concern about the constraints on regional fisheries development imposed by poor transfer and recording of information in the region and from a recommendation at the 18th RTMF.

77. The consultants presented the findings and conclusions of their study, and a draft budget for the implementation of PIMRIS. The meeting noted the value of the study and accepted the consultants' recommendations as to appropriate action areas for PIMRIS. It was considered that the budget should not be discussed at this meeting but should be left to negotiation between the implementing bodies via SPC, FFA and USP and potential funding agencies.

78. The representative of France emphasised the need to make all existing documentation concerning the region accessible by establishing a strong translation facility that would, in particular, give access to the abundant literature in Japanese. He also pointed out that PIMRIS would provide only a part of the region's information requirements if it did not avail itself of the powerful modern means of data transmission and processing, notably satellite image processing techniques.

79. The meeting noted the importance of an information network such as PIMRIS and congratulated the consultants and the regional organisations on their proposal.

Recommendation No. 13

The meeting strongly endorsed the Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS) proposal and recommended that the three co-operating organisations give the necessary approvals and make every effort to obtain funding for the early implementation of this important project.

80. The observer from ICLARM expressed his organisation's willingness to participate in PIMRIS and noted that ICLARM's South Pacific headquarters would shortly be re-located in Honiara, Solomon Islands. The representatives of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau also indicated their interest in being involved with PIMRIS.

XI. SPC INSHORE FISHERIES RESEARCH PROJECT

(i) Review of structure and activities

81. The SPC Fisheries Adviser presented working paper 8, which outlined the development and present structure of the Inshore Fisheries Research Project (IFRP).

82. The meeting strongly endorsed the need for the IFRP of the SPC as a matter of priority. Concern was expressed by the representatives of Tonga and New Zealand at the delays in submitting the proposal for the IFRP from the 18th RTMF to the CRGA.

83. The Fisheries Adviser stated that the current SPC management attached a very high priority to the implementation of the IFRP. A vacant position in the TBAP had been moved to the IFRP in order to allow early commencement of the project. Funding for the remaining scientific posts was currently under negotiation with the Government of the United Kingdom and these discussions should be concluded shortly. The Fisheries Information Officer position had been incorporated into the PIMRIS proposal but other funding avenues were also being explored that might allow earlier recruitment to this post.

84. The meeting requested that the SPC Secretariat obtain approval for an IFRP scientist position so as to enable re-instatement of the position borrowed from the TBAP.

(ii) Workshop on Pacific Inshore Fisheries Resources

85. The SPC Fisheries Adviser presented working paper 9, which outlined the objectives and contents of this workshop.

86. The representative of France deeply regretted that some aspects of aquaculture were not included on the workshop agenda. The Fisheries Adviser explained that because of the scope of the workshop and its relatively short duration, the Secretariat had been obliged to exclude a number of topics, including major consideration of aquaculture. The representative of France advised that several French government establishments, including aquaculture stations and a satellite image processing facility, would be operating at the time of the workshop and would welcome visits from participants.

87. The representative of Tonga introduced a proposal relating to the organisation of fisheries projects within SPC. The proposal was aimed at improving the ability of fisheries project staff to respond quickly to requests from member countries.

88. Several delegates expressed similar concern over the problems outlined in the proposal but indicated that such wide-ranging changes as suggested would need to be referred to their governments for further consideration.

89. The representative of France underlined the fact that the problem was twofold. While there were certainly improvements to be made within SPC with a view to greater efficiency, it was also necessary for member countries to review their internal administrative procedures for the same purpose. It would be useful, he felt, if the delegates present informed their national authorities of these problems and stressed the importance of finding ways of solving them.

90. The Acting Secretary-General advised that an Organisation and Methods Review currently before CRGA was addressing some of the issues in the proposal including the matter of communication between member countries and the fisheries programme of the SPC.

Recommendation No. 14

Noting the concerns expressed by the delegation of Tonga, the meeting recommended that the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) and the South Pacific Conference consider every possible way to further enhance administrative procedures of the South Pacific Commission as necessary to maximise the effectiveness of fisheries programmes.

XII. PROPOSAL FOR A REGIONAL COMPUTER TRAINING COURSE

91. The Fisheries Adviser presented working paper 13 which outlined an approach to fisheries-oriented computer training currently being jointly developed by SPC and FFA.

Recommendation No. 15

The meeting endorsed a co-operative approach and recommended that the South Pacific Commission co-operate with the Forum Fisheries Agency in developing and organising a regional training programme in the use of computers in fisheries departments and related institutions.

XIII. WORKSHOP ON MARKETING OF PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERIES PRODUCE

92. This half-day workshop was chaired by Dr A. Lewis of Fiji, and covered a variety of marketing concepts and considerations relating to the marketing of fisheries produce from Pacific Island countries.

93. Consultants Mr J. Hall and Dr N. Wilson opened the workshop with two presentations entitled "Introduction to marketing" and "The relationship between product and market development" based on information papers 10 and 11 respectively. Subsequently, consultant Mr J. Crossland presented working paper 4, "Marketing opportunities for Pacific bottom fish in Japan", which was based on a study he had carried out for the Forum Fisheries Agency late in 1985. A number of country representatives then made statements or brief presentations of working papers pertaining to marketing experiences or case studies.

94. The workshop discussions highlighted the following aspects of marketing of fisheries products:

- Marketing must be considered as a complete system involving elements from the stage of processing of catch to consumption of the product;
- Successful marketing usually requires entrepreneurial skills and an element of risk taking;
- The relatively small supplies of most fish species in the Pacific may be best marketed domestically or aimed at the top end of appropriate export markets;
- The importance of obtaining maximum benefit from limited resources by taking advantage of value added to product was noted;
- The importance of determining appropriate, reliable transport arrangements between producer and supplier was stressed.

XIV. PORT SAMPLING PROGRAMME FOR PACIFIC ISLAND PARTIES TO THE
U.S. MULTILATERAL TREATY - OBJECTIVES AND GUIDELINES

95. The TBAP Co-ordinator, Dr J. Sibert, opened the topic and referred delegates to working paper 19, which presented objectives and guidelines on port sampling procedures for sampling the catches of unloading purse seine fishing vessels. Dr Sibert noted that the recently signed Treaty between the United States of America and certain Pacific Island countries, provides for access to biological sampling of unloading US purse-seine catches by personnel authorised by the Pacific Islands party to the Treaty. The US National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has indicated that it will establish a port sampling programme and that they are willing to collect data as required by regional organisations including the SPC.

96. Several delegates made comments regarding technical aspects of port sampling, including the implementation requirements. The FFA Secretariat explained that FFA (as Administrator of the Treaty on behalf of the Parties), requested TBAP (as the scientific adviser to the SPC countries) to assist in the design of objectives and guidelines that would ensure that the potential benefit that a port sampling programme could confer would also meet TBAP requirements. He further emphasised that the decision on the future implementation of the programme rests with the Parties to the Treaty.

97. The representative of Kiribati enquired about the possibility of including personnel from countries party to the Treaty in the port sampling programme. The FFA Secretariat replied that initial discussion with NMFS indicated a good possibility to include collaborative work incorporating attachment of island personnel in the programme. The meeting then endorsed the TBAP's proposal to assist in port sampling activities and made the following recommendation.

Recommendation No. 16

The meeting recommended that the South Pacific Commission assist with a port sampling programme to be developed under the Multilateral Fisheries Treaty with the Government of the United States of America.

XV. CIGUATERA - A REGIONAL UPDATE

98. Mr M. Gawel, the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia, opened discussion on this topic and presented working paper 22, which provided background information on ciguatera poisoning and its relation to fisheries development.

99. The meeting agreed that the collection and publication of accurate, factual information on both ciguatera and mercury levels in Pacific Island fish species were important.

100. The meeting agreed that the 20th RTMF include a workshop on the problem of ciguatera and mercury in fish, and their effects on marketing of fishery products in the region.

Recommendation No. 17

Recognising that unfavourable reaction for Pacific Islands fish produce may be generated by ill-considered publicity given to the ciguatera problem, the meeting recommended that all agencies involved in ciguatera matters exert all possible care in ensuring that the issue is realistically portrayed, and that the Chairman of the 19th Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries write to the World Health Organization regarding a recently produced poster which was singled out for censure.

101. Mr Keith Meecham, Programme Director, FAO/UNDP Regional Fisheries Support Programme, offered to raise this issue through the appropriate UN channels.

XVI. REPORTS BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS

102. The following organisations presented details of their work to the meeting: FAO/UNDP, ACIAR, ICLARM, FAO/Aquaculture project, Australian Maritime College (AMC), ORSTOM, and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC).

103. The meeting recorded its appreciation to the outgoing Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme Co-ordinator, Dr J. Sibert, and wished him all the best in his future endeavours.

XVII. OTHER BUSINESS

104. There was no other business.

XVIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

105. The report of the meeting was adopted.

XIV. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

CONSIDERATION OF TWO TBAP EVALUATION REPORTS PREPARED FOR CRGA BY
CONSULTANTS MR T. CURTIN AND MESSRS S. T. CAVULATI AND J. CROSSLAND

Recommendation No. 1

The meeting recommended that the South Pacific Commission in close consultation with the Forum Fisheries Agency and member governments clearly define the roles of the two data bases, especially to ensure that duplication of effort in the collection and processing of tuna log-sheet data is minimised. Arrangements should ensure that data would continue to be collected in a suitable form for scientific analysis and be made available to the South Pacific Commission for that purpose. The South Pacific Commission, by offering the services of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme, should extend maximum assistance to the Forum Fisheries Agency data base project.

Recommendation No. 2

The meeting recommended that a Fisheries Co-ordinator, responsible for all South Pacific Commission activities in fisheries, including the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme, be appointed. Terms of reference should be:

- (1) to provide overall co-ordination and direction to South Pacific Commission fisheries programmes;
- (2) through on-going liaison with member countries to ensure that programmes are responsive to their needs;
- (3) to identify funding sources and assist in obtaining funding for fisheries projects;
- (4) to advise the South Pacific Commission Secretariat on fisheries matters;
- (5) to maintain contacts with other fisheries organisations.

Recommendation No. 3

The meeting agreed with the consultants' view that the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme staff would retain their involvement in the conduct of training, and recommended that responsibility for priority activity 8 (dealing with training) be transferred from the TBAP to the South Pacific Commission Fisheries Training Programme.

Recommendation No. 4

The meeting recommended that the South Pacific Commission review its policy on publications of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme and permit publication of scientific results in outside journals where appropriate.

Recommendation No. 5

The meeting recommended that summaries be produced in non-technical language of all major Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme scientific reports.

Recommendation No. 6

The meeting recommended that, following important work done on behalf of countries and publication of the report, the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme staff member responsible visit the country concerned to discuss the results with government officials.

Recommendation No. 7

The meeting recommended that the South Pacific Commission Fisheries Co-ordinator make regular visits to member countries to ascertain their needs and discuss ways in which the Commission's fisheries programmes can assist them.

Recommendation No. 8

The meeting recommended that the staffing requirements of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme be reviewed, taking into account planned future activities and any reorganisation of the South Pacific Commission's fisheries projects as a whole. In this review, new job descriptions should be prepared for each post relating each of them to the priority activities of the TBAP.

Recommendation No. 9

The meeting recommended that consideration be given to appointing Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme staff on contracts of three years.

Recommendation No. 10

The meeting recommended that provision of funds for attachment fellowships to the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme be made as a regular part of the budget.

Recommendation No. 11

The meeting recommended that sufficient funds be allocated from the South Pacific Commission's budget to meet the cost of the core functions of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme for its scheduled duration.

Recommendation No. 12

The meeting strongly recommended that increased funds be allocated within the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme's budget for travel by Programme staff.

CONSIDERATION OF A DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PACIFIC ISLANDS MARINE RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM (PIMRIS)

Recommendation No. 13

The meeting strongly endorsed the Pacific Islands Information Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS) proposal and recommended that the three co-operating organisations give the necessary approvals and make every effort to obtain funding for the early implementation of this important project.

SPC INSHORE FISHERIES RESEARCH PROJECT

Recommendation No. 14

Noting the concerns expressed by the delegation of Tonga, the meeting recommended that the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) and the South Pacific Conference consider every possible way to further enhance administrative procedures of the South Pacific Commission as necessary to maximise the effectiveness of fisheries programmes.

PROPOSAL FOR A REGIONAL COMPUTER TRAINING COURSE

Recommendation No. 15

The meeting endorsed a co-operative approach and recommended that the South Pacific Commission co-operate with the Forum Fisheries Agency in developing and organising a regional training programme in the use of computers in fisheries departments and related institutions.

PORT SAMPLING PROGRAMME FOR PACIFIC ISLAND PARTIES TO THE US MULTILATERAL TREATY - OBJECTIVES AND GUIDELINES

Recommendation No. 16

The meeting recommended that South Pacific Commission assist with a port sampling programme to be developed under the Multilateral Fisheries Treaty with the Government of the United States of America.

CIGUATERA - A REGIONAL UPDATE

Recommendation No. 17

Recognising that unfavourable reaction for Pacific Islands fish produce may be generated by ill-considered publicity given to the ciguatera problem, the meeting recommended that all agencies involved in ciguatera matters exert all possible care in ensuring that the issue is realistically portrayed, and that the Chairman of the 19th Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries write to the World Health Organization regarding a recently produced poster which was singled out for censure.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE TUNA AND BILLFISH ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

The meeting formally agreed on the need for a carefully defined Mission Statement for the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme and after due consideration adopted the following.

Mission Statement for the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme

In order to help member countries develop, manage and rationally exploit the renewable oceanic resources of the region for the long-term, the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme will conduct scientific research on the stocks which support these fisheries and on the environmental factors that affect them.

Objectives of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme

The following are suggested activities to be completed during the next year grouped under the priority areas.

1. **Collection and evaluation of fisheries data and maintenance of regional oceanic fisheries assessment data base**
 - a. Acquire modern data base management software.
 - b. Implement log-sheet data base on new software.
 - c. Consult with FFA and begin collaborative joint development of a fisheries data base.
 - d. Publish tabular data summaries and maps of catch distribution in the region.
 - e. Participate in the design and evaluation of port sampling projects and analyse resulting data.
 - f. Continue attempts to increase data coverage.
2. **Assessment of interaction between fisheries for oceanic species**
 - a. Begin field work for a collaborative in-country tagging project.
 - b. Begin large-scale yellowfin tagging project.
 - c. Renew attempts to collaborate with Japanese scientists on a joint analysis of Skipjack Programme tag return data and Japanese pole-and-line fisheries data.
 - d. Examine length-frequency data as an indicator of potential for fisheries interaction.

3. **Assessing and monitoring the levels of exploitation of stocks of commercially important tuna and billfish species**
 - a. Review fisheries data and begin to assess tuna stocks on sub-regional and country-specific basis.
 - b. Review data holdings on billfish and albacore fisheries.
4. **Studies on the biology and ecology of commercially important tuna, billfish and bait species**
 - a. Relate yield per unit area of fishing ground to known distribution of oceanic productivity.
 - b. Correlate CPUE measures with oceanographic data.
 - c. Conduct baitfish analyses if requested.
5. **Provision of fisheries observers and advice on development of observer programmes**
 - a. Participate in the observer training courses.
 - b. Conduct observer trips on longline vessels target fishing on albacore.
 - c. Assist in processing observer data.
6. **Monitoring the use of fish aggregation devices**
 - a. Conduct small-scale tagging operations in relation to FADs.
 - b. Participate actively in FAD research workshop and subsequent field activities.

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON TUNA AND BILLFISH

After consideration of a report prepared by the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish Working Group which met on 31 July 1987, the meeting agreed on the following terms of reference and composition for the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish.

**Terms of Reference of the Standing Committee on Tuna
and Billfish**

The intended role of this Committee is purely advisory and consultative. Its work will assist in the conduct of pelagic fisheries research through the provision of expertise, information and technical advice.

The Committee shall advise the Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries on biological research on stocks which support oceanic fisheries for tuna and billfish in the SPC region by:

- (i) assisting with the rigorous scientific review of the work of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme and suggesting improvements to the scope and techniques of the TBAP's research;
- (ii) assisting with and advising on the acquisition of relevant data to the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme, specifically that relating to fishing activities on the high seas surrounding the EEZs of South Pacific Commission member countries;
- (iii) arranging collaboration between South Pacific Commission staff and outside workers on problems of mutual interest.

Composition of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish

It is expected that the composition of the Committee would vary according to the specific tasks before it. In general, however, it shall consist of the following members:

- (i) Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme Co-ordinator or his representative;
- (ii) A representative from the Forum Fisheries Agency;
- (iii) Scientists from countries with a commitment to tuna fishing in the South Pacific Commission region, specifically including both Island states and distant water fishing nations;
- (iv) Technical experts invited by the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme Co-ordinator as necessary to assist in analysis of specific problems.

ANNEX III

LIST OF WORKING PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE MEETING

- SPC/Fisheries 19/Informal 1 - List of participants
- WP.1 - Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.2 - Towards a regional pelagic fisheries data base, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.3 - Evaluation of the South Pacific Commission Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.4 - Marketing opportunities for Pacific bottom fish in Japan, by James Crossland
- WP.5 - Summary of Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme activities, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.6 - Update of SPC's DWFN catch coverage in the SPC region, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.7 - Summary report of the SPC 1986/87 activities under the fisheries work programme - coastal resources, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.8 - SPC Inshore fisheries research project, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.9 - Inshore fisheries research workshop, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.10 - Country statement - Pitcairn
- WP.11 - Country statement - Federated States of Micronesia
- WP.12 - Country statement - Fiji

- WP.13 - SPC/FFA computer training course
- WP.14 - Country statement - Papua New Guinea
- WP.15 - Report of SPC/USP/FFA Fisheries Information Advisory Group meeting, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.16 - Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS), presented by the Secretariat
- WP.17 - Status of tuna resources and tuna research in New Zealand, by Talbot Murray, Kevin Bailey and J. Brian Jones
- WP.18 - Country statement - New Zealand
- WP.19 - Objectives and proposed guidelines for a port sampling programme for Pacific Island parties to the US Multilateral Treaty, presented by the Secretariat
- WP.20 - Country statement - Australia
- WP.21 - Country statement - Vanuatu
- WP.22 - Summary notes on fish poisoning investigations in the South Pacific, by Mike Gawel
- WP.23 - Some experiences in the export of fresh fish, by Christer S. Friberg
- WP.24 - Report on the tuna and billfish assessment programme, presented by the Technical Review working group
- WP.25 - Evaluation of the Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme of the South Pacific Commission, by James Crossland and S.T. Cavuillati

- WP.26 - Report of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish working group
 - WP.27 - Country statement - Kiribati
 - WP.28 - Country statement - Northern Mariana Islands
 - WP.29 - Country statement - Guam
 - WP.30 - Restructuring of the SPC fisheries programmes, presented by Tonga
-
- Information Paper 1 - Biological perspectives on future development of industrial tuna fishing, by John Sibert
 - 2 - Data base duplication, presented by the Secretariat
 - 3 - Staff structure of SPC Fisheries Programmes
 - 4 - Training programme in extension skills and communication techniques for Pacific Island fisheries officers
 - 5 - Some notes on aquaculture development in the South Pacific
 - 6 - USA fisheries activities in the central and western Pacific 1986/87, by NMFS Honolulu
 - 7 - ICAIR Project
 - 8 - Microcopying of fisheries documents, by Bess Flores, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau
 - 9 - Status and potential for development of fisheries and aquaculture industries of Guam
 - 10 - Introduction to marketing, by John Hall
 - 11 - The relationship between product and market development, DSIR Fish Unit

ANNEX IV

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Senior Fisheries Scientist
(Designate)

Mr Richard Farman
Fisheries Research Scientist

Mr James Ianelli
Fisheries Research Scientist

Mr Jeffrey Stander
Computer Systems Manager

Mr Samuelu Taufao
Programmer/Research Assistant

SPC SECRETARIAT (cont.)

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Documents Officer/TBAP

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Data Entry Technician

Mr Michel Mertens
Manager Interpretation/Translation
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Mrs Helen Wolfgramm-Page
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