

# WHAT PACIFIC ISLANDS ARE DOING TO MANAGE TUNA FISHING?



## TREATIES AND SURVEILLANCE: REGIONAL COOPERATION THE KEY

For the Pacific Islands to have sustainable tuna fisheries that their people, governments and industries can benefit from, they are working on three things. Firstly, they are aiming for effective management of fishing and any other human impacts on the habitat of tuna. Secondly, they are working to develop the fishery so people gain jobs, income and businesses of value from tuna, and finally they are improving monitoring, control and surveillance to make sure that fishing vessels comply with the rules and illegal fishing does not occur.

Examples of what the Pacific Islands have done to manage, develop and control their tuna include:

- National tuna management plans,
- Regional tuna management decisions through participation in Pacific Islands Forum fisheries Agency meetings and decisions of the Forum Fisheries Council,
- Participation in setting fishing limits and taking other conservation and management measures at WCPFC meetings,
- Developing local fishing businesses and other business that can increase the value and jobs created by tuna such as loining and canning operations,
- Securing regional and international agreements that can benefit local fishing industries,
- Creation of a Vessel Monitoring System at the Pacific Islands Forum fisheries Agency which tracks all licensed vessels in the region and supplies this information to member countries,
- Creation of a regional observer programme to supply observers on fishing vessels,
- Cooperation in Regional Surveillance Operations,
- Negotiation of treaties and other agreements to secure more financial benefits for Pacific Island countries and regional cooperation to manage and control tuna fishing.

*PACIFIC POSTCARD: A Pacific success story—the regional observer program (ROP): Care is taken to ensure Pacific Islanders are the bulk of around 150 observer staff in the region. Training and recruitment helps all observers, whether male or female, cope with long stretches of being at sea and being objective and neutral in their work. The information gathered from observers in their catch and effort reports are cross-checked with data about length of fish caught, a vessel activity report (provided by the vessel operator) and the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS).*





*Regional maritime surveillance exercises, such as this exercise by FFA members in 2008, are an example of how countries cooperate to detect, board and prosecute illegal fishing.*

#### US Treaty, 1988

Enables US purse seine fishing vessels to fish in the waters of Pacific signatories, and is renewed as needed with the current period running until 2013. PIPs are Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

#### Nauru Agreement, 1992

Sets terms and conditions for tuna purse seine fishing licences amongst signatories. Has three 'implementing arrangements' setting out specific rules for fishing in these countries, such as measures to restrict fishing in the high seas, the vessel days scheme, and 100% observer coverage of purse seine vessels. The Parties to the Nauru Agreement, or PNA, are Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

#### FSM Arrangement, 1994

Provides access for signatories to fish in each other's waters and promotes greater participation by Pacific Islanders to develop national fisheries industries. Signatories are Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

## A NEW ERA IN FISHERIES REGIONALISM

The Vava'u Declaration on Pacific Fisheries Resources 2007 named after the island where Forum Leaders met when they endorsed it. It commits Pacific governments to provide sufficient national resources to the fisheries sector, and asks the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and SPC to supplement national capacity and support regional action with a particular focus on Pacific fisheries development and the WCPFC.

#### Palau Arrangement, 1995

Complements the Parties to the Nauru Agreement and sets license limits by fleet on the number of purse seine vessels that can be granted by the signatories, or parties. Signatories are Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu.

#### Niue Treaty, 2007

Sets out to combat illegal fishing, and agrees on cooperation between Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency members about monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing - it includes provisions on exchange of information such as position and speed of vessels at sea, and which vessels are without licences, plus procedures for cooperation in monitoring, prosecuting and penalising illegal fishing vessels. Signatories are all 17 members of the Pacific Islands FFA.

*With the growing importance of sustainable development of tuna to the national economies of some FFA Member Countries, it would be unrealistic not to expect national interests to be at the forefront of decision-making. However, regional cooperation is also vital to fulfil national aspirations to capture more wealth from fisheries.*

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