

## VANUATU

### **1. Background**

#### ***1.1 Status of Oceanic Fisheries***

The Vanuatu Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is approximately 690,000 square kilometers and includes over 80 islands and an area of archipelagic waters.

Commercial tuna fishing commenced in Vanuatu in 1957 with the establishment of the Japanese South Pacific Fishing Company Limited (SPFC) longline transshipment base at Palekula, Espiritu Santo Island. The base, consisting of a wharf and cold storage facilities, was substantially upgraded in 1974. After handling annual landings of between 4-15,000 tonnes since 1969, SPFC closed its operations in the late 1980s and the facility was turned over to the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu.

US purse-seiners, licensed under the US Treaty fished on four occasions in Vanuatu waters in 1999, with very small catches.

SPFC signed a bilateral agreement with The Taiwanese Kaohsiung Fishing Association (KFA) in 1989, and this agreement remains in force today. There are plans to re-negotiate this agreement to bring it in line with national and international requirements and standards, and to increase licensing fees. As at August 2004, 85 foreign vessels were licensed, 38 of which are licensed under the KFA agreement - plus seven locally-based foreign vessels, two of which are no longer fishing. These locally based vessels tranship in Port Vila. Apart from the KFA vessels, the majority of the other longliners are Fiji-flagged Chinese longliners, operating through eight companies based in Fiji. The Korean vessels that were licensed in 2003 (29 vessels) appear not to have returned in 2004. The longline fleet operates from foreign ports, principally Suva and Pago Pago.

The longline catch is dominated by albacore, while yellowfin and bigeye contribute significantly to the value of the catch from Vanuatu waters.

Domestic tuna industry development has been slow to occur, despite the establishment of a FAD programme. High costs of operation and lack of airfreight capacity are among the issues that have constrained development. A locally-based charter fishing fleet is very active, fishing for tuna and billfish and making extensive use of FADs.

#### ***1.2 Oceanic Fisheries Management***

The major objectives of tuna management and development policy set out in the Republic of Vanuatu Tuna Management Plan are:

- 1. To ensure that the exploitation of the tuna resources that are found in and pass through Vanuatu waters is compatible with the sustainability of the stocks throughout their range.*
- 2. Within the limits of the sustainability objective, to ensure the harvest is taken in a way that maximizes the long term economic and social benefits received by the peoples of Vanuatu.*
- 3. To contribute to the food security of ni Vanuatu.*
- 4. To meet regional and international responsibilities for tuna management.*

The Tuna Management Plan allows for limits to be set on commercial fishing licenses for each of four categories of vessel, on the basis of target TACs which are set for each species of tuna taken in Vanuatu waters. The maximum number of tuna longline licenses has been set at 100.

A schedule of differential area closures covering local, locally based foreign and foreign vessels is in place. Restrictions include the closure to tuna fishing of inshore waters (6/12/24 miles) and certain areas associated with seamounts. Tuna fishing is prohibited within three miles of declared marine reserves. Factors taken into account when establishing closed areas

include provision of maximum opportunity to local vessels and to protect sea mounts and other areas determined to be important to marine diversity and productivity.

### **1.3 Oceanic Fisheries Institutional Arrangements**

The Fisheries Department is the primary agency responsible for oceanic fisheries management. The Department operates under the Ministry of Agriculture, Quarantine, Forestry and Fisheries. Following downsizing under the Comprehensive Reform Programme (CRP) in 1997, Department staffing was reduced from around 45 to 30 positions, with a further 50% cut in 1999. Currently there are 21 posts filled (increase due to revenue performance), with a long term aim (by 2010) of a staff of around 40. The 2004 annual budget for the Department is VT38<sup>1</sup> million, with income from oceanic fisheries licensing for the same year estimated at around VT100 million

The Department comprises five sections, three of which have relevance to oceanic fisheries management:

- The **Compliance and Licensing Section**, which licences permits and certifies all regulated oceanic fisheries activities and ensures that license holders comply with licence conditions.
- The **Development and Capture Section**, which is responsible for the FAD programme aimed at increasing the productivity of the inshore tuna fishery.
- The **Management and Policy Section** added during 2003. This section develops and implements OFP fisheries policies on a wide range of issues through the Director who is empowered under the Fisheries Act. Activities include: management planning; data collection, management and analysis; investment (local and foreign); proposal appraisal, development of management plans; and information dissemination.

The Department's annual budget is sourced from funds allocated from central Government resources, and is considerably less than the annual revenue generated by the Fisheries Department from licence fees and other sources. Over the last three years, this revenue has exceeded VT100 million.

The Tuna Management Plan envisages the establishment of a Tuna Management Account external to general government revenues that will be funded from a portion (45%) of foreign and local license revenues. The Account will finance *inter alia*: observers on foreign vessels; local development activities; better management of the foreign fishery; a permanent Tuna Management Advisory Committee to coordinate and plan OFP management activities; and a Tuna Management Coordinator position. The Tuna Management Account may also be used to support the activities of other government agencies involved in fisheries management including the Police Maritime Wing and the Vanuatu Maritime Authority.

Currently, consultative mechanisms with government and non-government stakeholders are ad-hoc. The recently agreed Tuna Management Plan allows for the creation of a Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TMAC). Preparations for the first meeting of TMAC are advanced, and letters of invitation to members await the signature by the Minister. Membership of TMAC, as outlined in the plan, is limited to government stakeholders, although there is the facility for TMAC to invite members of the industry and the general public to assist the committee with its deliberations from time to time, as required. There are plans to formally revise TMAC membership to include wider stakeholder participation.

### **1.4 Donor Involvement**

Under Australian Defence Force funding, Australia provides one Pacific Patrol Craft (RVS Tukoro) and associated training and logistical support. Vanuatu also receives support in oceanic fisheries management programmes from a range of donor-supported programmes provided through FFA and SPC.

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<sup>1</sup> US1.00 = 110 Vatu as at 25 August 2004.

### **1.5 Other Oceanic Fisheries Management Issues**

Other oceanic fisheries management issues that arose in the mission to Vanuatu include:

- oceanic fisheries are gaining a political profile in Vanuatu, with increases in vessels licensing (currently 91 longliners licensed to fish in the EEZ) and interest being shown in basing operations locally;
- current levels of IUU are of concern and plans are in hand to increase compliance cooperation with neighbouring states including Fiji and Solomon Islands;
- deficiencies in reporting, including on catch and effort data from the longline fleet, are hampering accurate information on which to monitor the fishery and base management decisions; and
- the uneven application of MTCs by some states, is hampering Vanuatu's stand on the enforcement of VMS and other bilateral licensing regulations.

## **2. Vanuatu and the WCPF Convention**

### **2.1 Overview**

With a tuna industry based on longlining, Vanuatu's primary aims in the MHLC and Prep Con process have been:

- to secure the sustainability of the region's tuna stocks and fisheries;
- to negotiate a convention that is practical and enforceable, given the capacity and resources of Pacific island states;
- to negotiate an agreement that would secure maximum economic and other benefits to Vanuatu and ensure Vanuatu's interests are not overlooked; and
- to ensure the long term sustainability of the longline fishery targeting albacore, but noting the importance of bigeye and yellowfin.

As a Member of the Commission and a Party to the WCPF Convention, the major short term areas of implications for Vanuatu are seen as follows:

- increasing fisheries management responsibilities against severely constrained human capacity and funding;
- need for the more timely and comprehensive collection of catch and effort data;
- increasing scrutiny of Vanuatu-flagged vessels operating in the WCPO;
- an increased level of at-sea surveillance; and
- the establishment of an observer and enhanced port sampling programme.

Overall, Vanuatu is in the early stages of developing a sustainable management framework for oceanic fisheries resources. The revised Fisheries Act, combined with the approved Tuna Management Plan, will provide a useful basis for the implementation of the WCPF conventions.

### **2.2 Implications of the Convention**

#### **2.2.1 Legal**

The main articles of fisheries legislation in Vanuatu are the 1983 Fisheries Act and the Maritime Act and the associated subsidiary legislation (Fishery Regulations, Tuna Management Plan, and Maritime Regulations).

The current Fisheries Act lacks a framework for Vanuatu's participation in the WCPFC or other RFMOs to which Vanuatu has acceded. The Act also does not make mention of Vanuatu's substantial flag state responsibilities. However, the Act and associated Regulations have recently been reviewed and amendments prepared for ratification which deal with these and other regulations. It is anticipated that Parliament will consider the relevant Bill in late 2004 with the new Act entering into force in 2005.

The Tuna Management Plan, approved by the Council of Ministers on June 8<sup>th</sup> this year, also does not adequately address Vanuatu’s flag state responsibilities in regard to tuna fishing. The Plan proposes that the Vanuatu Maritime Authority (VMA) take primary responsibility for the collection of tuna fishing data from Vanuatu-registered fishing vessels. The Plan does however anticipate what steps Vanuatu will need to take to fully accommodate obligations under the WCPF Convention, and to effectively participate in the work of the Commission.

Legislation is also pending relating to the operation of vessel monitoring, especially relating to Vanuatu flag vessels.

The table below summarises the status of Vanuatu’s adoption of relevant international legal instruments and declarations. Due to the full political agenda and the capacity and workload of the State Legal Office, certain routine activities have been delayed, including the ratification of the WCPF Convention.

Vanuatu has very limited fisheries legal capacity in its State Law Office, with the recent departure of two lawyers who possessed some fisheries-related legal training and experience. With increasing licensing and other responsibilities, the Fisheries Department is seeking to employ its own legal officer. Even with this proposed appointment, there will be a need to build capacity at the State Law Office in international fisheries law issues, and especially those relating to the implementation of the Convention. Similarly, there is a need for awareness raising in capacity building of other relevant sections of government, including the Police Maritime Wing and Prosecution Office, to take account at the local level, of the global significance of moves against IUU fishing.

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Status</b>
WCPF Convention	Signed, not ratified
UN Convention on the Law of the Sea	Ratified
UN Fish Stocks Agreement	Signed, not ratified
Driftnet Convention	Ratified
Convention on Biological Diversity	Ratified
FAO Code of Conduct	Adopted
WSSD fisheries targets	Not formally adopted
FAO Compliance Agreement	
FAO International Plans of Action	Not implemented
FFA Minimum Terms & Conditions	Implemented

### **2.2.2 Policy/Institutional**

As the Fisheries Department has been successful at increasing revenue, both through licensing more vessels and increasing the access fee for longline vessels, tuna fisheries are being afforded an increasing level of priority in Vanuatu. Currently, oceanic fisheries are considered to be on a par with inshore fisheries in terms of their priority.

As discussed, the Tuna Management Plan has been agreed by Cabinet and is now being implemented.

The policy/management functions of the Fisheries Department are constrained by the level of available funding and related staffing levels. These constraints will make it difficult for Vanuatu to meet obligations associated with their forthcoming obligations under the WCPF Convention/Commission. In addition, the workload on the fisheries executive has increased substantially, owing to the need to cover expanding domestic oceanic fisheries, attend regional fisheries meetings and have input to ensuring adequate flag state control over Vanuatu flagged fishing vessels in the WCPO and elsewhere.

If an application to have a proportion of earned income from licensing returned to Fisheries is successful, there is an intention to establish a Policy and Management Unit within the Department.

The cost of financial contributions for Vanuatu to the WCPF Commission is estimated to be in the range of US\$20-25,000 per year, on the basis of estimates by the Prep Con Interim Secretariat using catch data up to 2002, but would be substantially greater than this, taking into account the more recent catches of around 20 new Vanuatu-flagged purse seine vessels.

### *2.2.3 Compliance*

Compliance activities in Vanuatu are handled by the Compliance and Licensing Section of Fisheries, in collaboration with the Police Maritime Wing.

The Police Maritime Wing operates one Australian Pacific Patrol Craft, the RVS Tukoro, whose primary duty is fisheries surveillance. The operation of Tukoro is severely constrained by operating funds for fuel and allowances, and the current budget is only sufficient for three seven-day patrols per year. The Australian Defence Force, via its Maritime Surveillance Advisor, tops up operating costs by providing A\$110,000 per year for fuel. This enables the patrol boat to complete around 60-80 days at sea per annum. Currently, with only two surveillance officers, Fisheries are unable to place staff on the Patrol Boat. This surface activity is supported by aerial surveillance by New Zealand, Australia and France, and surface patrols by the French Navy.

Despite these efforts, the level of IUU in Vanuatu waters is considered to be unacceptably high, as evidenced by repeated reports of illegal fishing from inter-island ferries, commercial flights and the inhabitants of outer islands. There is also concern that DWFN vessels are receiving intelligence concerning the activities of the patrol craft. There are, currently, efforts in place to increase the at-sea activity of the patrol boat, which will be assisted by a proposal to divide any fines or agreed penalties between Fisheries (25%), Police Maritime Wing (25%) and government general revenue (50%).

A programme of awareness-raising in the outer islands and by craft transiting the EEZ on the issue of IUU fishing, including the identity of vessels and fishing activities, is considered a priority.

Application has been made by the Fisheries Department to significantly strengthen its Compliance and Licensing Division by upgrading existing officers and establishing four additional posts.

All vessels licensed under bilateral fishing agreements must carry FFA type approved VMS equipment, and in line with recently-agreed MTCs, these must be turned on and proved operational before the issue of licences. The hardware for the FFA VMS system is housed at the Joint Police Operation Centre and is operated by the Police Maritime Wing. Owing to training and other difficulties, Fisheries intends to appoint and locate a full time officer at the Joint Police Operation Centre, to coordinate VMS operations and establish closer links with the Police Maritime Wing.

A Maritime Surveillance Planning Group, whose membership includes Fisheries, the Police Maritime Wing and the Vanuatu Marine Authority, is scheduled to meet monthly to coordinate surveillance activities. The Group has not met for six months, but is planning to recommence meetings in September 2004.

In order to augment its surveillance assets, Vanuatu is seeking to reach agreement on Niue Treaty arrangements with Fiji and possibly Solomon Islands. A joint surveillance agreement with New Caledonia is also being considered.

In addition to the regional VMS managed by FFA, Vanuatu also operates a National VMS system, contracted to Tuna Fishing (Vanuatu) Ltd, to monitor Vanuatu flag vessels operating throughout the world. Data downloaded are passed to the relevant RFMOs as part of the reporting and monitoring process.

### *Flag State Responsibilities*

Vanuatu operates a vessel registry, the Vanuatu International Ship Registry (VISR). The VISR recorded over 400 registrations in 2003, of which 86 were fishing vessels. Vanuatu has been working to exercise improved flag state responsibility over these vessels, through a vessel data and compliance project since 2002. Fishery Certificates of Origin (CoO), as authorisations to fish, linked to TFVCL, have been issued to longliners fishing in the Pacific Ocean. The CoO was recognized by Japan in 2003 as an instrument to permit offloading in that country, the major market for high value fresh and frozen tuna. One Vanuatu flagged vessel without a CoO was recently refused permission to land fish in a South African port, indicating the potential effectiveness of the system. These CoOs are to be replaced by Authorisations to Fish Certificates at a cost of US\$5,000 each for longliners and US\$10,000 for purse seine vessels, in compliance with WCPF Convention requirements.

Vanuatu is now a member of all major tuna RFMOs (IATTC, IOTC, and ICCAT), has ratified the WCPFC and is intending to join CCALMR in the near future.

To deal more specifically with the range of issues associated with the management of international operations by Vanuatu flag vessels the establishment of a three-person Fishery Data and Compliance Unit (FDCU), with an estimated budget of US\$ 100,000 p.a., has been proposed by a consultant, possibly funded by levies on vessels on the VSIR.

#### *2.2.4 Monitoring*

All foreign and domestic licensed vessels are required to provide catch and effort information at the operational level on approved logsheets. However, limited logsheet and landings data are provided to the Vanuatu Fisheries Department. While vessels are also required to provide entry and exit reports when operating in the Vanuatu EEZ, the level of reporting is unknown. Many of the Fiji-based vessels provide logsheets in respect of fishing activity in the Vanuatu EEZ to the Fiji Department of Fisheries. There is a need to improve the timeliness and coverage of returns for vessel activity and vessel characteristics for Vanuatu-flag vessels.

There is very limited transshipment of tuna and shark (around 80% of landings) in Vanuatu from the five locally based foreign fishing vessels. Around 50% of these transshipments are sampled. A PDF project has been approved, which will train additional port samplers to take the level of coverage to 100%. Port sampling of fish caught in Vanuatu waters and landed in Fiji, is covered by the sampling programme implemented by the Fiji Department of Fisheries.

There is currently no observer programme in Vanuatu, other than the occasional provision of observers under US Treaty arrangements. There is a clear need to implement an observer programme to provide coverage of the longline fishery and Vanuatu is keen to get training and other support to make this happen. As an interim step, there is a proposal to accredit Fiji observers to work on vessels fishing in Vanuatu waters and vice versa.

The Fisheries Department operates a licensing database that contains information on vessel characteristics.

All logsheet data received by the Fisheries Department are sent to OFP for processing and incorporation into the regional and Vanuatu national databases. The Fisheries Department are equipped with the CES software for generating reports of catch and effort data. Summary data from the longline fishery are provided annually to SCTB. The Department has applied for the establishment of an additional data entry clerk.

With the increased activity of Fiji-based vessels in Vanuatu waters, improved linkages between Fiji and Vanuatu fisheries agencies are required. These will improve the collection of data from the Vanuatu EEZ, including logsheet, unloading, observer, and port sampling data.

Overall, Vanuatu needs considerable assistance to meet expanded monitoring requirements under the WCPF Convention. The major assistance needed, will be for the establishment of an observer programme and capacity building of existing and proposed statistical staff to enable

them to analyse catch and effort data to support routine monitoring of the fishery. Vanuatu will require the assistance of regional organisations for this function.

### 2.2.4 Scientific Analysis

Vanuatu wishes to improve national capacity for scientific analysis on oceanic fisheries, but as with other activities, is constrained by resources. Vanuatu will continue to rely on SPC for stock assessment analysis and related advice which is currently considered sufficient to meet Vanuatu's needs. In the future, Vanuatu wants to develop its own capacity to interpret data from national monitoring programmes. In addition, it wishes to interpret and apply the results of regional stock assessments and ecosystem analysis, to better understand and explain changes in the fishery to stakeholders.

The national catch and effort database is about to become operational with assistance from SPC. Further assistance from SPC will be needed to produce the verified estimates of annual catch by species, gear and fleet for Vanuatu waters expected to be required to meet the data standards established by the Commission.

## 3. Potential Contribution of SAP II Project

Potential areas in which the SAP II Project could contribute to assisting Vanuatu in the implementation of national activities related to the WCPF Convention are summarised in the table below.

Activity	Incremental Actions	Possible Assistance
<b>Legal</b>		
Revise Legal framework	Revise Act and Regs (Largely completed)	Attachments, awareness raising and training courses.
Establish Fisheries Law programme	Train State Law Office personnel and Fisheries Department Legal Officer	
Support Commission participation	Provide legal advice	
Implement Commission decisions	Provide legal advice, change regulations, licences	Regional Legal Workshops On-demand legal advice during capacity building phase. In-country Prosecution Workshops
<b>Policy</b>		
Participate in regional policy formulation	Commission meeting participation	Regional Fisheries Management Training/Consultations
	Additional FFA Meeting participation	Attachments Regional Fisheries Management Training/Attachments/Workshops/Consultations
<b>Compliance</b>		
Increase IUU deterrence in-zone	Improve licensing, vessel register Improve effectiveness of patrol, inspection, investigation, prosecution	Regional MCS Working Group participation. Support to establish Niue Treaty initiatives with neighbouring states. In-country and regional Inspection, VMS staff training
Ensure flag vessel control and compliance	New authorisation process; inform Commission	Regional Training on flag state responsibilities
<b>Monitoring</b>		
Improve at-sea data Improve catch composition data	Establish observer programme Expand Port sampling	Assistance to establish observer programme. In-country and regional training of port samplers and observers by FFA/SPC
<b>Science</b>		

Improve national statistical info. Provide catch/effort estimates to the Commission Improve understanding of oceanic resources and ecosystem	Strengthen statistical capacity  Strengthen national capacity to analyse national data Strengthen national capacity to interpret regional analyses Enhanced capacity to interpret oceanographic information	Establish catch and effort database Statistical support from SPC  Ongoing support from SPC Training for national scientific staff to interpret stock assessments and oceanographic information
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**ANNEXES**

- Annex 1 Stakeholder Inventory and Analysis (including consultative mechanism inventory)
- Annex 2 Record of Stakeholder Consultation

**Annex 1 Stakeholder Inventory and Analysis (including consultative mechanism inventory)**

**Stakeholder inventory data sheet**

Country: Vanuatu  
 Date: 24<sup>th</sup> August 2004  
 Data Recorder: Seremaia Tuqiri  
 E-mail: [stuqiri@wwfpacific.org.fj](mailto:stuqiri@wwfpacific.org.fj)

Stakeholder	Representative / Post	Contact details  Country Code (679)	Description of interests (factors that may influence participation)	Stakeholder analysis and preliminary participation plan		
				1 <sup>st</sup> stakeholder (role in decision making)	2 <sup>nd</sup> stakeholder (2-way flow of information)	
Department of Fisheries	Mr Moses Amos Director	Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries Port Vila Tel: (678) 23119 Fax: (678) 23641	National Fisheries Authority & Fisheries Compliance	X		
Police Maritime Wing	Mr Tari Tamata Commander Maritime	Vanuatu Police Force Ministry of Internal Affairs Port Vila Tel: (678) 26570 Fax: (678) 27542	Fisheries compliance & monitoring	X		
Department of Foreign Affairs	Mr Paul A. Sami Head Asia/Pacific Division	Ministry of Foreign Affairs P.M.B. 051 Port Vila Tel: (678) 22913 22347 Fax: (688) 23142	Foreign policy and Treaty administration and negotiation	X		
State Law Office	Ms Jane Jereva Ms Viran Molisa	Office of the Prime Minister Private Mail Bag Funafuti Tel: (688) 20823 Fax: (688) 20817	Drafting of legislation and legal advise (international law)	X		

**Vanuatu**

Environment Office	Mr Sylvester Bani Director		GEF Focal Point		X	
Department of Economic & Sector Planning	Mr Thomas Bangalini Natural Resource Sector Analyst	Ministry of Finance Port Vila Tel: (678) 22605 Fax: (678)	Project financing & assessment		X	
Shefa Fishermens Association	Mr John Firiam President	Shefa Provincial Government Port Vila Tel: (678) 22752 Fax: (678) 22785	Industry	X		
Sports Fishing			Recreational		X	

**Inventory of Project-related national consultative mechanisms**

Consultative body	Parent/host body	Representative/ contact details	Area(s) of interest	Frequency of meetings	Members and affiliations
Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TMAC)	Fisheries Division	Chairman: Director of Fisheries Tel: (678) 23119	Responsible for implementing all aspects of the Tuna Management Plan and provision of advice to the Minister and the Council of Ministers on all aspects of tuna conservation and management.	Minimum once per year	Fisheries Division, Vanuatu Maritime Authority, Police Maritime Wing, and State Law Office. The TMAC may invite other members of government, industry and the general public to assist the committee with its deliberations from time to time as required.
Maritime Surveillance Planning Group	Police Maritime Wing	Commander Maritime Tel: (678) 26570	Coordination of surveillance activities.	Monthly	Fisheries Division, Police Maritime Wing, Vanuatu Marine Authority, Customs and Immigration

## Annex 2 – Record of Stakeholder Consultation

### VANUATU

#### PRIMARY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Dumbea Conference Centre

Port Vila

Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2004

#### Participant List:

Thomas Bangalini, Department of Economic Sector Planning; Jaso Raubani, Department of Fisheries; Tari Tamata, Police Maritime Wing, Jimmy Rantes, Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Vanuatu; Wesley Obde, Department of Fisheries; Moses Amos (**CHAIR / TECHNICAL ASSISTANT**), Director of Fisheries; Ian Cartwright, Mission Consultant (International); Seremaia Tuqiri, Mission Consultant (Regional)

The mission to Vanuatu held a primary stakeholder consultation at the Dumbea Conference Centre to discuss the purpose and development of the GEF SAP II project. Six participants attended the consultation.

Mr Ian Cartwright provided an overview on the *Management of the Oceanic Fisheries of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean* before the presentation on the *GEF SAP II Project: Strengthening National Fisheries Management* (on the implementation of the new Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention). It is worth mentioning that parts of Ian's presentation were translated into Bislama to enable participants to fully understand issues that were being discussed. Fisheries personnel who translated were subject matter experts given that they were talking within their areas of expertise (e.g. state responsibility for flag vessels – Wesley Obed); PrepCon process and the main features of the WCPF Convention – Moses Amos) and used the Vanuatu experience as the basis of their discussions.

Issues raised during the discussion were as follows:

- Financial resources to meet the obligations under the new Convention will be a challenge, in common with a number of other Pacific Island countries.
- The GEF SAP II presentation is timely particularly with respect to the financial responsibilities that Vanuatu is expected to undertake, as well as financial assistance that it expects to receive in order to implement its responsibilities under the WCPF Convention. This information is necessary so that Fisheries can feed the information into the Budget, while enabling Government to be aware about the expectations and responsibilities of becoming a party to the new Convention.
- The potential for developing the recreational fishing industry further exists but is yet to be explored. There is recognition that Government will have to deal with issues of shared interest between recreational fishing on one hand and the tuna/billfish industry on the other. It is important to know where the fisheries industry stands, in relation to other related industries.
- Interest was expressed in establishing a new Policy Division within the Department of Fisheries, as well as scientific, monitoring, and assessment components. Collaborative work with Fiji's Department of Fisheries in these areas is being planned.
- The capacity to implement fisheries laws, policies, and compliance requirements is low and needs to be strengthened.

**VANUATU**  
**PUBLIC FORUM**  
**Dumbea Conference Centre**  
**Port Vila**  
Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2004

**Participant List**

Thomas Bangalini, Department of Economic & Sector Planning; Jason Raubani, Department of Fisheries; Emelee Christophe, Tuna Fishing Vanuatu; Donald Manses, Police Maritime Wing; Remy Frouin, Ymer Charters (Game Fishing); John Firiam, Shefa Fishermen Association; Moses Amos, Department of Fisheries (**CHAIR/TECHNICAL ASSISTANT**); Sompert Rena, Department of Fisheries; Wesley Obed, Department of Fisheries; Harold Poatick, Ocean Fishing Ltd.; Michel K. Kalworai, Shefa Provincial Council; Felix Nguyen, Department of Fisheries; Andrew Firiam, Department of Fisheries; Justin Reo, Kahuna Charters.

The Mission to Vanuatu held a public forum to create awareness of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention and the tuna industry in the Pacific Islands. Although attendance was not as strong as in the other four countries visited, it was nonetheless important in the sense that representation came from government, industry/private sector, and fishing association. The forum was chaired by the Director of Fisheries.

1. The FFA has been tasked, on behalf of Pacific Island countries, to assist in negotiations for a multilateral agreement with Taiwanese longliners. An initial attempt fell through in 1997.
2. Vanuatu is expected to be one of the higher financial contributors to the Commission, among Pacific Island countries (approximately USD23000.00), largely because of its flag state involvement. Payments to the Commission will start in 2005 and will have some impact on the national budget.
3. Under Vanuatu's Tuna Management Plan, a portion of the levies earned from the issuance of licenses will go to a Trust Account to assist Vanuatu pay for its annual contribution to the Commission. While this amount is considered high for Vanuatu standards, the opportunities and benefits that Vanuatu will gain from its membership may be seen as offsetting the cost.
4. Vanuatu has signed but is yet to ratify the WCPF Convention. The Convention came into force on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2004.
5. The Tuna Management Plan supports the action that a percentage of fines received due to illegal fishing activities be directed to strengthening Vanuatu's surveillance capabilities.
6. A proposal from the People's Republic of China for the establishment of a cool storage facility on Efate has been received specifically to accept frozen fish for export. The VT150 million that it would cost to set up this facility is expected to be drawn from the VT400 million aid money from China to the Government of Vanuatu.
7. The Department of Fisheries must work closely with the private sector to strengthen fisheries management and compliance capabilities. The fact that Membership of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) does not as yet include industry and/or non-governmental organization(s) has been noted.

Other consultations were held prior to and after the two meetings. These were with:

- **Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries**
  - Mr Moses Amos, Director

- Mr Wesley Obed, Licensing and Surveillance Officer
- **Department of Economic and Sector Planning, Ministry of Finance**
  - Mr Thomas Bangalini, Natural Resources Sector Analyst
- **Police Maritime Wing, Vanuatu Police Force, Ministry of Internal Affairs**
  - Mr Tari Tamata, Commander Maritime
- **Department of Foreign Affairs**
  - Mr Paul Sami, Head of Asia/Pacific Division
- **State Law Office (equivalent to the Attorney General's Chambers)**
  - Jane Jereva, State Counsel
  - Viran Molisa, State Counsel
- **Department of Environment & Conservation**
  - GEF focal point was on duty travel