

WHAT HAPPENED AT WCPFC 5?



PACIFIC POSTCARD:

The city of Busan, Korea was host to WCPFCs - commission members will head to Papeete, French Polynesia from 6-11 December 2009 for WCPFC6, with a return in Pohnpei, FSM for WCPFC7 in December 2010.



PACIFIC LEADS AT BUSAN: HIGHLIGHTS OF WCPFC 5

• Cutbacks to protect tuna numbers:

A new measure on fishing of bigeye and yellowfin tuna was agreed at WCPFC 5. This included a phased-in reduction of purse seine and long line fishing, a phased-in ban on fish aggregating devices for 3 months of the year and the closure of two high seas pockets to stop overfishing of bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna. Many of these measures were previously adopted by a group of Pacific Island countries that are Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) and the outcome of WCPFC 5 significantly strengthened the actions they had already taken in their fishing grounds.

• Strengthening vessel monitoring:

WCPFC 5 approved plans to work with

FFA to have a WCPFC Vessel Monitoring System, to track and monitor licensed vessels on the high seas, by 1 April 2009.

• Allowing SIDS to shine: WCPFC5 passed a resolution on the aspirations of small island developing states (SIDS), with progress on this to be reported at future Commission meetings. The Marshall Islands presented the resolution on behalf of FFA members, who make up 17 of the 32 commission members. Developed members were asked to make an effort to reduce and restructure their fleets to allow small island developing states and territories to grow their fishing industries, and to support investments of small islands in new fishing development initiatives.

Fijian Ambassador Satya Nandan, who was formative in negotiating the set up of the Commission, was appointed the new Chair of the WCPFC at its meeting in Korea in 2008. Satya Nandan, a diplomat and lawyer from Fiji specializing in ocean affairs, began a two-year term on 1 January 2009. Before that he had been the first Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, a position he held since March 1996. The former ambassador is recognised internationally in his field and has led many UN conferences related to the Law of the Sea. He was Chairman of the Multilateral High Level Conference which negotiated the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (1997-2000).



FFA



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Victory for Tonga as FSM also targets illegal fishing



At WCPFC 5, Tonga won its bid to get a Taiwanese fishing vessel to pay the fine for illegal fishing in its waters or be put on the WCPFC Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Vessel list. The bid by Tonga to seek adequate prosecution of the Taiwanese vessel was supported by FFA members throughout the process and is being hailed as a positive outcome for Pacific nations to let the world know it takes illegal fishing seriously. FFA members are able to prosecute poachers fishing illegally in national waters according to national laws, under Article 73 of the UN Law of the Sea Convention.

The challenge for the WCPFC members is that while flag states such as Taiwan are responsible for investigating alleged offences and imposing penalties when complaints are upheld, the flag state may not always impose a penalty that satisfies the country where the offence happened.

More will need to be done to truly reduce overfishing. ...as owners of the world's biggest tuna fishery, FFA members will continue to participate in the WCPFC to strengthen control and management of tuna fishing in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

*Theofanes Isamu
(Chair of the Forum Fisheries Committee)*

WHAT NEW CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES (CMMS) DID WCPFC5 DELIVER?

CMM for Big eye and Yellow fin:

Getting down to the business of how to reverse overfishing for two of the main tuna stocks was the main agenda item for WCPFC5. For all commission members, the priority CMM merited a list of activities complementing each other and planned over the short and medium term to help levels get back to a healthier state including:

- A cut of 10 percent in long line fishing;
- Closure of the high seas and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) to FAD fishing (using Fish Aggregating Devices) for two months in 2009 and three months in 2010 (July-September);
- Prohibition of purse seine fishing vessels from throwing juvenile fish back to sea;
- Agreement to close two high sea pockets, details of which will be finalized, including consideration of

closing all high seas pockets, by the WCPFC 2009)

- Future 100 percent coverage of purse seine fishing vessels with observers.

CMM on sea turtles: By-catch was also a major issue for WCPFC5. Updates to the CMM on sea turtles fine tuned the need for members to actively work to reduce impact of fishing on sea turtles. The CMM clarifies that nothing in the measure stops coastal States – all FFA members, from their right to pursue traditional fishing activities such as fishing for sea turtles.

CMM on driftnets: WCPFC5 passed a CMM prohibiting the use of large scale driftnets on the high seas in the WCPFC Convention Area.

CMM on swordfish: A revised CMM tabled in 2008 was heavily debated and passed with amendments. It calls for better standards of reporting and catch records for swordfish in the WCPFC area.

MORE INFORMATION: Oceanic Fisheries Management Project: www.ffa.int/gef or email barbara.hanchard@ffa.int

Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency: www.ffa.int or email info@ffa.int. **Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission:** www.wcpfc.int or email wcpfc@mail.fm.



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