

FOREWORD

Tuna fisheries have been identified as one of Tonga's most important natural resources. Until recent years, we have experienced challenging times with our domestic longline operations. The rising fuel prices, declining and low catch rates and global economic crisis puts all of us in a very difficult situation to stay above water in our operations and for the technical and policy support and advice the government can offer. That said, we must progress forward in developing this resource for the benefit of our people.

This Tuna Fishery Management and Development Plan (TMDP) has been prepared in line with Tonga's Fisheries Management Act 2002 and Tonga Strategic Development Framework. This is a revised Plan that replaces the expired TMDP. It is a high level policy document that provides guidance to the management and development of tuna fisheries in the period 2012-2015.

This Plan was prepared using the process of ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM), and through broad consultations with relevant stakeholders. The Plan draws from a number of reports and policy documents including Tonga EAFM Report & Operational Plan, National Tuna Fisheries Status Report (NTFSR), and fisheries related regulations. The Plan presents the key management, development and compliance strategies and future guidance frameworks. Stemming from this Plan, the Operational Plan provides strategic directions upon which the management actions will be implemented. The implementation of this plan is timely to fulfill our national and international obligations and further provide for the sustainable development of our domestic tuna fishery.

My Ministry acknowledges financial and technical assistance from the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) towards developing this plan. The Plan is the result of many stakeholder consultations and meetings through the EAFM process and it reflects the views and wishes of our people.

This Plan requires full support and cooperation of the tuna fishing and processing sectors and the Fisheries Division. This plan shall ensure that your investment and our resources are managed in the most effective and sustainable way.



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Honourable Sangster Saulata
Minister of Agriculture & Food, Forests & Fisheries.

