



# Ministry of Fisheries

## Quarterly Newsletter March

### US and Pacific Revisits Fisheries Multilateral Treaty

Government and industry representatives of certain Pacific Island member states and the US met at Honolulu during March 6-10 2006 to commemorate the 18th year of the Multilateral Treaty on Fisheries and review its progress.

Dr Sione Vailala Matoto, Secretary for Fisheries, and Mr. Vilimo Fakalolo, Principal Fisheries Officer, represented the Government of Tonga.

The main issues discussed were:

- the continued decline of the US fleet;
- The proposed mechanism for distributing the outstanding annual fund of US\$3 million for each licensing period plus interest since 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003;
- the proposed budget of US\$118,000 for the observer programme for the 19th licensing period and for the consideration of the US;
- the proposed budget of US\$679,617 for the 19<sup>th</sup> Licensing Period, an increase of US\$111,798 over the previous licensing period.

A presentation on the status of the purse seine fishery in the Western and Central Pacific Commission was made by SPC.

It showed that the purse seine catch has increased steadily over time and is currently more than 1.2 million tonnes annually.

The catch and effort by all major fleets with the exception of Taiwan is estimated (on the basis of data received and processed to date) to have increased slightly in 2005.

The spatial distribution of effort by the major non-US fleets shifted somewhat to the east in 2005, resulting in a greater degree of overlap in fishing activities of these fleets and the US fleet.

Tonga has benefited from the Treaty from which a total of USD4.370 millions to date has contributed to developing the sector.

The consultation between the parties is an annual event which is hosted by governments of the Pacific Island states on a rotational basis.

### Top Team Retreated to 'Otuha Resort

The Ministry of Fisheries' Top Team retreated to 'Otuha Resort at Kanokupolu Village from Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2006 to review Fisheries' performance.



The Top Team assessed the industry's economic performance by looking closely at trends of fisheries export volume and value and its impact on the national economy.

The assessment also evaluated the Ministry's performance, specifically fisheries resource development and management.

The retreat was a workshop style event where each participant had a specific role to play in terms of reporting on achievements and challenges of fisheries development.

At the end of the three days event, a plan was rolled out which outlined a set of actions for 2006.

A representative of the fishing industry, Mr. Lennie Nitt, and officials from relevant government agencies, such as the Ministry of Finance and the Central Planning Department, joined the Top Team at 'Otuha Resort.

The Top Team retreat is the second event in a capacity building initiative funded by the Tonga Fisheries Project.

### FFA Trade Study

A team of consultants comprising Ms Amanda Hamilton, FFA Project Economist, and Mr. Lian Camplig, a Consultant from the University of London, arrived in Tonga on February 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 to carry out a study specifically on fisheries trade in Tonga.

The study is part of a regional initiative driven by the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) where six countries, one of which is Tonga, were selected as benchmarks for the regional trade study.

The team met with Government agencies such as Customs, Statistics, Finance, Environment and others including fishing companies such as 'Alatini Fisheries, Maritime Project Tonga Ltd plus other related Organization such as Tonga Development Bank and Aid Agencies.

The FFA study looks to fulfill the following objectives :-

- Assist FFA members to better understand WTO rules relating to fisheries, particularly tariffs & subsidies
- Assist FFA members to understand the implication of PICTA and how this affects fisheries trade.
- Assist FFA members to seek accommodation of their trade interests and needs in the negotiation of WTO rules and regional trade agreements.
- Identification of trade opportunities for FFA members that may strengthen intra-regional and international trade links
- Evaluation of trade opportunities and development of action plans, taking into account WTO rules and regional trade agreements.
- Identification of their trade interests and needs in the negotiation of WTO rules and regional trade agreements.

The team departed Tonga on February 13<sup>th</sup> 2006 after an intensive investigation.

## SPC Supports Fisheries Strategic Planning

Mr. Mike King, a Consultant deployed by SPC, visited Tonga during the first half of January 2006 to assist senior managers in their strategic planning capacity.

His visit was part of a regional initiative supported by SPC in response to requests from member countries in 2003/04 for regional strategic and corporate planning capacity building.

Mr. King's visit coincided with the Ministry's planning process therefore he met with each senior manager to review their annual work plans in the context of the Ministry's core functions and expected outputs.

A review of the Ministry's existing functional structure was also undertaken with a view to improving efficiency and refocusing priorities on core accountabilities.

## Seaweed Campaign

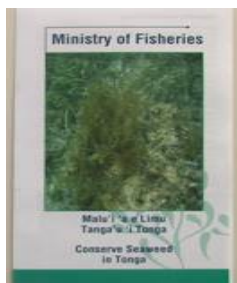
A series of brochures about conserving seaweed were published and distributed widely as part of an awareness campaign.

Recently seaweed has become a commercial commodity and export in 2004 reached a record high.

However, the high volume of seaweed harvesting dropped tremendously in the following year suggesting that additional to unfavourable climatic conditions, harvesters did not consider the sustainability of this fishery.

The campaign against destructive harvesting methods is part and parcel of resource management and development to ensure that seaweed harvesting is sustainable in Tonga.

Ministry of Fisheries is grateful to SPC for their assistance with the publication of the brochures.



## Destructive Fishing Campaign

The result of the Primary School Art Competition on Destructive Fishing in June 2005 formed the idea for a Fisheries Calendar 2006.

The Tonga Fisheries Project and the Ministry of Fisheries co-funded the production of the Calendar 2006.

The calendars were distributed to all Primary Schools in Tongatapu, Vava'u, Ha'apai; local communities; Government Departments; Regional Organizations and all Fisheries Industries in Tonga.



## Vava'u Fisheries back Online.

After weeks of no email and internet communication with headquarter, the computer network and system for the Vava'u Fisheries was back on line after reinstallation of programs.

Mrs. Lavinia Vaipuna, Computer Programmer, provided the maintenance support and assistance to the Vava'u office including an in house computer training for Vava'u staff on MsWord, MsExcel, Networking and Databases.

## Refresher Course for Observers

Mr. Siosifa Fukofuka, SPC's Sampler and Observer Trainer, conducted a 3 days in country refresher course for Tonga's Observer.

The refresher course started on the 7th of March 2006 until the 9th of March 2006 at the Ministry's training room.

Recently some changes were made to the format of the information recording on fishing vessels and the participants were updated on these changes to ensure they are well informed before their re-deployment on local longliners.

The participants were Mr. Taani Fa'oa, Mr. Siosifa 'Amanaki, Mr. Hapakuki Talasinga, Mr. Joseph Baker, Mr. 'Anitelu Maea and Mr. Nisifolo Siale all of whom were involved in the observer program since 2004.

The Observer training and deployment program is a local and regional program supported by the SPC and the FFA.



Siosifa Fukofuka, SPC

## STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON FISHERIES LEGISLATION

A compliance officers, led by Fisheries Legal Officer, Mr. Villiami Mo'ale and Tevita Latu (Princial Fisheries Officer) traveled far and wide to consult with outer island communities on the Fisheries Management Act 2002, the Aquaculture Management Act 2003, and related Regulations.

The consultation was sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat as part of their support to developing countries in strengthening its management capacity through the application of management tools such as legislation and regulations.

The objectives of the consultation are to:

- Create better awareness among Resource Takers and User (RTU) of the purpose and requirements of the legislation and its likely impact on their fisheries related activities and livelihoods
- Convince RTUs that they are the actual owners of the fishery resources and are responsible for their sustainable development and management
- Inform the RTUs that the legislation are fisheries management tools for them and the government to use in the management process
- Conduct open discussions to obtain constructive inputs from RTUs on the legislation
- Improve the capacity of local experts to better understand fisheries management and the practical implication of fisheries law on RTUs and the fishery resources.

The consultation will cover the outer islands including Ha'apai, Vava'u, and the Niua's.

The consultation team have consulted with the residents of the Niua islands and the Vava'u group. Their consultation is expected to complete by the end of the first half of the year.

## In-house Knowledge Transfer

A workshop was conducted by Community Fisheries Advisors, Mr. Sailosi 'Alofi and Mr. Sione Mailau on Fishing Gear Technology from 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

The workshop aimed at up-skilling existing staff on mending fishing nets, constructing Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) and longline fishing gears.

Mr. 'Alofi said that a lot of new staff do not have the skills which are necessary for supporting community fishing and the workshop is one way of ensuring that the existing and new staff are trained properly so that they are able to respond appropriately to community needs.

The workshop was held at the Ministry's training centre at Sopo and the participants were awarded a certificate of participation. Additional workshops are planned for staff in the outer islands. Separate workshops will also be scheduled for local fishermen in Tonga tapu and the outer islands.



## New Kid in the Block

A new and young Fisheries Officer, Miss Mele Ikatonga Makasini, joined the Ministry at the beginning of the year following the completion of her undergraduate training at USP, Suva.

Miss Makasini said, " I am grateful for the opportunity to join the Ministry at a time when jobs are becoming difficult to find. I look forward to engaging actively in the fishing industry and I hope I will make a difference".

Miss Makasini joined the stock assessment team for the initial period of her orientation

program and is expected to learn about the various fisheries functions through a rotation program.

The orientation program is part of the Ministry's staff development program which ensures that new members of the Ministry have an in-depth appreciation of the Fisheries core functions and its role in developing the fisheries sector.

Miss Makasini received a Government scholarship for a Bachelor of Science program in 2003. Her training were focused largely on scientific aspects of fisheries and she anticipates settling into the job smoothly.

Congratulations Mele and welcome to Fisheries.



Miss.Mele Ikatonga Makasini

*Comments and inputs from readers are welcomed. Please contact the following address for information or clarification relating to comments made in this newsletter.*

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Ministry of Fisheries, Sopo

