



## PACIFIC ISLAND FISHERIES - MANAGEMENT

### HISTORY OF PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

As they moved to extend their jurisdiction over the waters off their islands in the late 1970s, the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) joined with Australia and New Zealand in agreement on the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency Convention, committing themselves to cooperation in the management and development of fisheries in the areas within their newly extended jurisdictions.

As part of their cooperation under the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), members:

- adopted standard forms for data collection and voluntary arrangements to provide these to a centralised database which underpins the establishment of what is probably the largest international fisheries database in the world – the database, managed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Oceanic Fisheries Project, currently includes historical records of approximately 2.7 million fishing operations by more than 9,000 different fishing vessels and covers fishing conducted in the region since 1950.
- set up the first compliance-related regional register of fishing vessels (including a regional blacklisting arrangement for vessels committing serious offences), which predates the requirement for similar mechanisms established under the UN Fish Stocks Agreement as a cornerstone of arrangements for managing fishing in areas including the high seas;
- harmonised minimum standards for reporting, vessel identification, boarding and inspection and other monitoring control and surveillance mechanisms applied to all foreign vessels and now being applied to all domestic vessels; and
- created the first regional satellite-based Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), now tracking around 950 large scale fishing vessels operating over vast areas of ocean – a mechanism now also required by the UN Fish Stocks Agreement to be applied to all high seas fisheries for highly migratory and straddling stocks.

Pacific SIDS also concluded a number of legally binding treaties and high level Agreements covering cooperation in surveillance and enforcement (the Niue Treaty), control of foreign fishing vessels, management of fisheries of common interest (the Nauru Agreement, commonly known as the PNA), limits on licensed purse seine fleet capacity (the Palau Arrangement), ban on the use of driftnets (Wellington Convention) and included the requirements for these Treaties and Agreements into their national laws.

Pacific Islands also negotiated the Multilateral Treaty on Fisheries Between Certain Governments of the Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America (commonly referred to as the "US Treaty" and the first time the US entered into a fishing treaty). The US Treaty first started in 1987 and enables US purse seine fishing vessels to fish in the waters of the 16 Pacific Island Parties under certain conditions.