



## FOURTH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE (RSC) FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS OCEANIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Apia, Samoa  
17-18 October 2008

### SUMMARY RECORD OF DISCUSSION<sup>1</sup>

1. The fourth meeting of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) for the Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project (OFM Project) was held in Apia, Samoa, 17-18 October 2008. Representatives from the following participating country governments and organizations were present: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Pacific Islands Tuna Industry Association (PITIA) and the United Nations Development Programme. A list of participants is appended at **Attachment A**.

#### *Opening of Meeting*

2. Povave Fainuuleilei, the new Head of Fisheries for Tokelau, opened the meeting with a prayer. The Project Coordinator briefly welcomed the FFA member delegates, UNDP and other organizations attending the meeting and thanked the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Samoa for hosting the meeting.

#### *Introductory Remarks*

3. Toily Kurbanov, Deputy Regional Representative, UNDP Suva, made introductory remarks that explained the importance of the Oceanic Fisheries Management Project (OFMP) and objective of the meeting. A copy of his introductory remarks is appended at **Attachment B**.

#### *Opening Remarks*

4. Dan Sua, Director-General of the Pacific Islands Forum fisheries Agency made an opening address. A copy of his opening address is appended at **Attachment C**.

#### *Procedural Issues*

5. The Co-Chairs for this meeting were Peter W. Graham, Ministry of Marine Resources, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, and Toily Kurbanov, Deputy Regional Representative, UNDP Fiji. The Co-chairs welcomed participants and representatives from various organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> Endorsed in October, 2008.

### *Apologies*

6. Apologies were received from the Tongan Project Focal Point, AusAID and the WWF Pacific Programme.

### *Adoption of Agenda*

7. The provisional agenda was adopted, and a copy is appended at **Attachment D**.

### *Agenda Item 1: Annual Reports*

8. The OFM Project Co-coordinator, Barbara Hanchard provided an overview of the “Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project Annual Reports” contained in working paper RSC4/WP. 4. She noted that these reports are required to be completed for GEF funded projects and are designed to provide monitoring and evaluation information required by both UNDP and GEF but that they also served as annual reports to the steering committee each year.

9. The UNDP/GEF Annual Performance Review/Performance Implementation Review (APR/PIR); and the GEF International Waters Annual Project Performance Results Framework (PPR) are prepared by the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) and UNDP. They were tabled for the Committee’s consideration noting that the overall rating for both reports ranged between satisfactory to highly satisfactory. The annual reports were followed by presentations high lightening progress of project activity delivery.

10. The Committee noted and endorsed the 2007/2008 UNDP/GEF APR/PIR and the GEF International Waters Annual PPR Framework reports.
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### *Agenda Item 2: Implementation Reporting*

11. Staff from the FFA, SPC and IUCN made individual presentations relating to the relevant project components and activities.

#### *SPC*

12. Dr Don Bromhead, Fisheries Scientist Oceanic Fisheries Program from SPC outlined progress in Component One of the OFM Project for which SPC have the responsibility for implementing. The presentation by Dr Bromhead is available on the OFMP website<sup>2</sup>.

13. SPC took the opportunity to update the Committee on their efforts to continue the work achieved for developing national stock assessment capacity under the project and explained that further funds needed to be sourced as the activity allocations under the project had been completed. The Committee was informed that in order to access UN funds there is a need for letters of support from countries to fund a further workshop next year. SPC thanked those countries that had already supplied letters also mentioning that the UN had initially indicated that only three countries needed to provide letters of support, but that SPC has since been informed that all countries involved needed to provide letters of support. Dr. Bromhead indicated that he would contact the remaining countries seeking support letters.

14. Marshall Islands sought some clarification and update on SPC OFP’s effort to secure funding for next year’s tuna data and stock assessment workshop through the UNFSA fund. In responding to SPC’s presentation, some countries expressed their concerns at the difficulty

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<sup>2</sup> [www.ffa.int/gef](http://www.ffa.int/gef)

they had in clearly identifying SPC projects that were GEF funded for reporting purposes. SPC confirmed it would endeavour to minimize this confusion, noting that many OFM Project activities were also supported from other funding sources, as was the case with the stock assessment workshops in 2008. While initially funded under the project, they have been continued to be held by securing funds from other sources.

15. The OFMP Project Coordinator noted there is a logo to identify the project activities and a summary of project activities is circulated to focal points annually in an attempt to identify clearly for Focal Points the GEF funded activities.

16. The Cook Islands noted that focal points may need to be clear in communicating these to all relevant staff in country.

17. PNG expressed appreciation for GEF OFMP funding in increasing the capacity of national staff to contribute to tuna meetings and WCPFC meetings, noting that the stock assessment and observer training had been of great value. They noted the need to continue such capacity building work and to do training on statistics so officers could do basic scientific analysis and understand key scientific papers. SPC indicated it would review which of its activities currently address this need and if resources permit, look for ways to strengthen those activities to increase basic analytical capacity.

18. Niue echoed the appreciation expressed by PNG and others for assistance, raising the additional issue of placing a list of reporting of species of interest to a country such as sharks and wahoo.

19. Kiribati supported these statements of appreciation and wanted noted for the record that it did submit a national report but this was not reflected in last year's record. Kiribati also requested further TUFMAN and basic observer training.

20. Samoa acknowledged the contribution of GEF OFMP funding to increasing national capacity and supported initiatives which encouraged staff to not just collect but analyze data.

21. Vanuatu also expressed appreciation for GEF OFMP assistance particularly in relation to support for the national data coordinator and training for this position, mentioning that in the process of establishing a fish plant they may need assistance for biological sampling.

22. In joining others expressing appreciation for GEF OFMP assistance, Nauru asked whether staff submitting online training feedback had been responded to. SPC indicated this was the case but only a few countries had participated in the second online revision exercise and that continuation of the online training is dependant on future participation levels being higher.

23. Tonga/PITIA supported comments about the need to build capacity of officials and industry in relation to scientific issues.

24. The Cook Islands echoed appreciation for GEF OFMP assistance and noted that this had been of practical use in responding to the needs of industry and their Fisheries Minister. The Cook Islands also expressed support for capacity building initiatives which they considered prepared fisheries staff for participation at Management Options and WCPFC meetings.

25. Palau expressed appreciation for GEF OFMP assistance and asked about further training of staff in TUFMAN which SPC indicated that this request would be communicated to the Data/statistics section of OFP who would respond to Palau directly.

26. Tuvalu expressed appreciation for GEF OFMP assistance in capacity building and asked whether it would be possible to take this further by training of staff to perform stock assessments. SPC indicated undertaking regional stock assessment depends on firstly, having access to all required data (which individual countries generally do not have) and secondly having staff with a much higher level of statistical and mathematical training (i.e. PhD level) than OFP-SPC could possibly provide to national fisheries staff. SPC encouraged countries to support their staff in obtaining tertiary qualifications in fisheries science and indicated that SPC will wherever possible provide support to such endeavours. Niue requested to look at developing exercises in the stock assessment training workshops which utilize national level data. SPC indicated such data could be utilized in the workshop to help countries better understand the relative impacts of their fisheries on the stocks.

#### *IUCN*

27. Kelvin Passflied, Marine Programme Officer, IUCN made a presentation on the redesigned IUCN activities under the OFMP components one and two explaining his role and work of IUCN Hawaii researcher Eric Gilman and that of consultant Paul Bartram. He pointed out that both his position and that of Eric Gilman were partly funded by this project and partly by IUCN core budget. The IUCN project activities within the scope of the project objectives now involves a study of the impacts of pelagic longline fishing on seamounts, based on interviews with fishermen and an associated workshop and report. A copy IUCN's presentation is available on the OFMP website.

28. IUCN further acknowledged the mid-term review recommendations that suggested that IUCN should improve their knowledge of the project, increase coordination between OFMP partners and be collaborative with other regional research. He noted that the coordination of the IUCN work plan of the OFMP had only recently been transferred to the Pacific earlier this year and that he himself had only recently been recruited. In that time, a strong relationship with other project partners was emerging and in particular he wished to thank Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries staff for their assistance in facilitating fisher interviews in Samoa and Valerie Allain at SPC for providing relevant seamount data. He recognized that a certain amount of information and past research reports on seamounts existed and requested countries to let him know of any information or further research regarding seamounts either in-country or which they were aware of regionally.

29. Palau raised the question of which countries would be involved in the study to which IUCN responded that it would focus on those with domestic longline fleets. Palau suggested that IUCN might like to approach NOAA or Japan, both of whom conducted seamount research in the region.

30. Niue noted a point of interest of the interaction between whales and seamounts and a need for information about this.

31. Samoa raised the question of what the purpose of the seamount research is including whether any recommendations affecting fishing development would come out of it. Tonga raised similar concerns relating to seamounts and snapper fishing and the possibility of linking such research with certification. IUCN reiterated that it was not looking to make recommendations regarding bottom fisheries and its intent is that the research would inform policy makers about sustainability of fish stocks and seamounts rather than specific fisheries management recommendations for countries.

32. Cook Islands pointed out the limited reliability of research dependant on industry sources and the study should include scientific information and advice from SPC. IUCN responded that there was close collaboration with SPC on this work.

33. PNG considered that the seamount research is timely and will have implications wider than fishing (such as seabed mining) and other benefits of this increased knowledge.

34. In response to a query from the Co-chair about the date of release of the IUCN research report, IUCN responded that they hoped to have a draft completed by mid 2009.

#### *FFA*

35. Presentations were made by key staff of the FFA in relation to activities of Component two of the OFMP.

36. Dr Manu Tupou-Roosen, Legal Counsel, FFA, presented information on the progress of legal reform activities in the OFMP (noting that many of these activities were funded by various sources including the GEF OFMP). The presentation by the FFA Legal Counsel is available on the OFMP website.

37. PNG expressed their thanks for the legal assistance provided by Legal Counsel and other staff and consultants participating in sub-regional workshops and for the funding agencies enabling these activities. PNG also noted that they saw a real difference in the ability of countries to participate in WCPFC meetings and this was due to assistance provided including that for the sub-regional workshops under OFMP.

38. Moses Amos, Director of Fisheries Management, FFA, outlined policy reform and institutional strengthening activities under OFMP and the progress made to date. The FFA Director of Fisheries Management's presentation is appended at is available on the OFMP website.

39. He noted the concerns of countries about national capacity and staff turnover and pointed to the assistance available for short term attachments both through the project and the work programmes of the FFA & SPC. He pointed out that project attachments did not necessarily require country nominations to undertake their fellowships at the FFA but that short term training or attachments at other relevant organizations or institutes could be entertained. He reiterated that FFA's key interest is to increase national capacity for effective tuna management, control and development in any way it can.

40. PNG suggested that funding be continued for such projects as this is very useful for Pacific Island countries and reiterated their support of GEF and others funding that would result in the improved participation at WCPFC by Pacific Islanders due to better preparation.

41. The UNDP Fiji Deputy Regional Representative asked FFA what they thought were the policy reform initiatives and approaches that stand a chance of informing best practices across the region and what were the lessons learnt from institutional strengthening activities under the OFMP were?

42. FFA responded that the implementation of institutional strengthening activities are also supported by AusAID funding and were discussed at FFC in May. Capacity building remains a major challenge for many countries unable to deliver on implementation of WCPFC measures because of lack of institutional capacity. Political stability and will also hold up progress on many institutional strengthening initiatives and can require a lot of work at the national level to overcome.

43. Samoa echoed the sentiments expressed about institutional strengthening challenges and argued that there would still be a continued need to build and consolidate national

capacity. The Cook Islands pointed out limited numbers of staff meant that staff had to cover several areas of expertise.

44. The Co-Chair pointed out that this national capacity challenge is not unique to the Pacific but by expanding the breadth of capacity building initiatives to include many individuals, by doing work in-country and building procedures, mechanisms and processes at the institutional level could assist. Interventions that are sustained and co-funded had been proven to be effective in other parts of the world.

45. Andre Volentras, Director of Fisheries Operations, FFA, reported the progress of work being undertaken by the Monitoring Compliance and Surveillance (MCS) group under Component 2 of the OFMP which relates to the sub-component on Compliance Strengthening which. A copy of the presentation by the FFA Director of Fisheries Operations is available on the OFMP website.

46. He also acknowledged the importance of fisheries and environmental staff working together to ensure fisheries is taken into account as part of broader environmental initiatives and potential GEF5 funding.

47. Marshall Islands outlined a national observer training that they themselves had recently conducted and asked if assistance for this under OFMP was possible. The FFA indicated this seemed feasible and would be examined.

48. Tuvalu suggested training of trainers for observer training would be more cost effective for the FFA and at the same time build national capacity. SPC and PNG confirmed this has happened in the past with observer training and this approach had also assisted Solomon Islands (through exchange of staff).

49. The Project Coordinator, outlined the progress for activities regarding project coordination, information strategies and stakeholder awareness through industry and nongovernment organization agreements with PITIA and WWF and cooperation in activities. A copy of her presentation is available on the OFMP website.

50. The Project Coordinator also explained that a draft baseline study for the project had been completed and would be circulated for comment shortly.

#### *Annual Report 2007*

51. The Project Coordinator made a presentation on the final Report of the Annual Review 2007 contained in working paper RSC4/ WP.4 as an output of the monitoring and evaluation responsibilities of the PCU. She noted that the report had been circulated earlier in the year to the Steering Committee and that no comments were received. It was thought useful to draw the Committee's attention again to the findings and recommendations of the annual report and the progress made towards the implementation of the recommendations, along side the Mid-term Review.

#### *National Project Reports*

52. National project reports (verbal) were provided to the meeting by all except FSM which was not in attendance on the first day due to a delayed arrival in Samoa. Copies of written National Reports<sup>3</sup> submitted to the PCU are available on the OFMP website.

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<sup>3</sup> Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

*Agenda Item 3: Financial reporting, work plans and budgets*

53. Royden Gholomo, Project Finance and Administration Officer, presented financial reporting as detailed in working paper RSC4/WP 6. This included the 2007 Financial Report and Auditors Report, the 2008 approved Budget, a 2008 Interim Financial Report, a report of the 2008 estimated carry forward and the draft 2009 Budget and AWP. His presentation is available on the OFMP website.

54. In relation to 2008 Interim Financial Report, the PCU noted that the \$3.2million total included actual carry forward not spent last year and the full IUCN budget in anticipation of work commencing in 2008. A revision of the IUCN budget is now allocated across 2008-2010 but these adjustments do not affect the overall budget.

55. Tonga asked about unspent funds and the process for country application for using these funds. FFA confirmed that under spending in some areas are attributable to over budgeting and some may be due to lack of requests by countries. The PCU reiterated that any unspent funds would be used for activities in the approved work plan and program of the project rather than entirely new or unrelated projects. The PCU anticipated that at the end of the project cycle there would not be significant unspent funds in part due to exchange losses regarding the USD and increased costs for project funded posts.

56. The Co-Chair commented the finances seemed well managed in that the audit recommendations had been taken on board by the project team and encouraged the team to continue to improve financial administration of the project.

57. The Committee noted and endorsed 2007 Financial and Audit Reports, the 2008 Interim Financial Report, the amended IUCN Budget and work plan and the 2009 Draft Budget and work plan.

*Agenda Item 4: Mid Term Project Review*

58. The Lead consultant for the independent Mid-Term Review of the project, Leon Zann presented the outcomes and recommendations to the Steering Committee of the review which was contained in working paper RSC4/WP.7. He began by acknowledging all effort involved in the project and considered that it was successful due to the dedication of many individuals particularly as the project is immense in its scale and complexity making it a remarkable step in management. The Mid-term Review consultant's presentation is available on the OFMP website.

59. During the review the Consultant noted issues relating to capacity were raised and while institutional strengthening, national development, innovation were seen to be 'well addressed' by OFMP, gender and equity/human rights issues were not.

60. The consultant emphasised that effective planning and design had ensured a timely start, high level of cooperation, 'ownership', coordination & maximised chances of success for the project. Existing resources were utilised and he considered that the OFMP provided an appropriate model for other multi-stakeholder projects.

61. However, the Consultant highlighted a number of weaknesses that would need to be addressed, if not within the current project, than in any future programme of assistance. These included:

- i) that the needs of smaller Pacific SIDS were not adequately considered
- ii) some key stakeholders (e.g. SPREP & USP) were not involved
- iii) some national consultation committees were inadequate
- iv) information dissemination needs were not met
- v) the PCU was insufficiently resourced (particularly in terms of administration);
- vi) adaptive management capacity was limited; and that
- vii) longer-term financial support to WCPT Commission was uncertain and there was a need for a strategic approach to the Commission in general.

62. In concluding his presentation the Consultant drew the Committees attention to the recommendations in the review contained in the report.

63. Anna Tengberg UNDP Regional Technical Advisor made a presentation of the UNDP's Management Response to the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review and further explained the process of Adaptive Management which would be applied to project amendments. A copy of her presentation is available on the OFMP website.

64. The UNDP Management Response template contains the review recommendations and responses to those and the delegation of timing and responsibilities to address the recommendations. The Mid-term Review recommendations include that:

- i) OFM PCU is better supported & greater focus is given to information dissemination in the second term of the Project.
- ii) SPC should assist in the development of oceanic fisheries science within Pacific SIDs in this term of the Project.
- iii) Development in oceanic fisheries science within Pacific SIDs is a priority in the proposed new capacity-building Project.
- iv) Seamounts program is coordinated by the new scientist at the IUCN Oceania Office to ensure collaboration within the SPC/IUCN Seamounts programme, with other OFM Project activities, and with other agencies involved in seamount research in the region.
- v) A suite of appropriate indicators should be developed within the Logical Framework to better monitor progress in Project Outputs and Activities. (and progress in achieving outcomes and impacts)
- vi) partnerships with appropriate agencies be enhanced
- vii) Gender, human rights and equity issues should be better promoted
- viii) performance of each NCC should be evaluated by the PCU and be reported to the Project Steering Committee, and assistance in kind be given where appropriate to assist in their operations.
- ix) new project should be developed for strategic, long-term capacity-building in OFM in Pacific SIDS
- x) strengthened linkages to MDG targets and Pacific Plan for mainstreaming of GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GPAS) and Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) and that
- xi) a future programme should include private sector engagement – supply-chain analysis, certification schemes, etc.

65. The UNDP Technical Advisor further outlined the Adaptive Management Framework and pointed out that GEF projects tend to be overdesigned so Adaptive Management softens the common criticism that project documents are too rigid, and that it is important to be aware of changes allowed and levels of authority required for approval.

66. Samoa asked about the recommendation regarding direct involvement of other agencies such as with USP and SPREP? The consultant suggested that SPREP and USP be invited to participate in the Steering Committee and the Co-Chair suggested as an interim step these organisations be provided with information about the Steering Committee with the view

towards involving them in the meetings in future. SPC supported these suggestions, indicating that it would improve communication on overlapping activities and potential areas of collaboration between USP, SPREP and SPC.

66. The Federated States of Micronesia commented on the involvement of other organisations in the project reflected in the review and considered that the reason that the current project was so successful was that it had a narrow focus and that if the recommendation was implemented, it may mean the focus of the project on benefits at the ground level would be lost. It was agreed by UNDP that there was a trade off between scope and focus and that this should not jeopardise the direction of the project.

67. The Marshall Islands commented regarding national consultative committees (NCCs) and whether these have been helpful for some noting that the Marshall Islands has yet to establish one. The Marshall Islands asked if the effectiveness of NCCs would be analysed in regards to coordination with this project.

68. The PCU acknowledged that there were mixed responses to NCCs as reflected in the Annual Review 2007 and suggested the PCU would look at doing a consultancy on the effectiveness and issues associated with establishing NCCs. The PCU reminded the Steering Committee that there were limited project funds available to assist countries with NCCs and to date only one country has made use of this.

69. Tonga suggested contact points and responsibilities could be broadened to identify key contacts with other groups as has been done with an industry contact point in Tonga and reiterated the importance of getting the right representatives of groups which may or may not be sitting on other committees.

70. The Co Chair recommended The Mid-Term Review as an important learning tool for all involved and thanked UNDP and Consultant for the report.

71. The Steering Committee endorsed the Mid-term Review Report and management responses in principle and looked forward to a report on the response and actions at the next Steering Committee in 2009.

*Agenda Item 5: Project sustainability and follow up*

72. The Project Coordinator outlined the purpose and relevant issues in regard to project sustainability and follow-up as outlined in working paper RSC4/WP 8. The issues raised drew from the outcomes of the Annual Report 2007 and the Mid-term Review and considered that it was not too soon to consider the sustainability of achievements of the OFMP and the possibility of a further phase of assistance from GEF, taking into account project achievements, uncertainty of the funding priorities of GEF and emerging initiatives that may impact on the design or approval of a further phase. A copy of the presentation is available on the OFMP website.

73. Additionally, the Project Coordinator considered that in order to evaluate project progress, information in the baseline study (available shortly) will be necessary. This should provide a comprehensive analysis of the status of stocks, robustness of available science, the quality of management and economic and development aspects.

74. The Steering Committee discussed the merits of considering a next phase of assistance, how an application for a next phase to GEF would happen and what the prospects of approval were. It was also pointed out to the Steering Committee that a higher level of endorsement would be required, such as the FFC, for the development of a further phase.

75. UNDP provided advice on the timeline for a further phase coming online if it was approved but underlined the need to conceptualise the next stage before considering the practicalities of application. The UNDP Technical Advisor noted that there would probably be an issue of a possible gap between the current phase and next phase of the GEF funding due to the anticipated schedule of GEF replenishment between GEF4 and GEF5 funding tranches and suggested the need to set aside bridging funds for this period.

76. Niue expressed concerns for the level of assistance for WCPFC participation that would be available to them as a small fisheries administration if the project came to an abrupt halt or there were delays in the commencement of a next phase. The PCU explained that while the project activities would end, the work programmes of the FFA and SPC supported by other donors would continue to provide that assistance to countries albeit with some consideration to priorities.

77. PNG noted its previous comments on the value of assistance from OFMP to the countries and also emphasised the co-funding responsibilities for national governments in some areas, pointing out that the smaller island nations would probably require more funding from donors for quite a while yet. PNG considered that capacity building still needed funding and that the PCU should draft documents now that brings funding and project activities online so there is not a lag in progress of OFMP.

78. The Federated States of Micronesia noted, supported by Niue, the issue of limited capacity in countries and need for continued assistance from GEF. The Cook Islands concurred and further suggested that the concept of a scoping study of national needs and priorities was needed in the first instance. The scoping exercise would tease out the different national needs with the view towards sustainability and weaning off GEF funding in future.

79. Samoa echoed these comments regarding the need for a second phase to further build capacity for the oceanic fisheries management at national level and international level, and suggested the need for a suite of options in the scoping study.

80. Vanuatu also supported the sentiments expressed by others for the support of a second phase of OFMP, noting that compliance with WCPFC measures and the strain that places on Pacific Island countries, concluding that the OFMP has been important assistance and this should continue.

81. The Cook Islands drew the Steering Committee's attention to the MCS audit currently underway as part of development of the regional MCS Strategy and that the outcomes of this should be considered in the scoping study for the requirements of OFMP assistance.

82. The Steering Committee endorsed the recommendation to forward to the special FFC68 for consideration the possibility of a further phase of assistance from GEF after 2010; and the commissioning of the terms of reference for a scoping study to develop a concept note.

83. In closing the Steering Committee meeting the Co Chairs thanked the participants for their attendance and contributions to discussions noting the progress made over the day and half. Appreciation was expressed to the PCU for meeting preparations and again to the hosts, Samoa Fisheries.

*Next Meeting*

84. The PCU advised that the venue and timing of the next Committee would depend on the Management Options Consultations but that timely advice would be provided once a decision had been made.

85. Samoa accepted the nomination to co chair the next meeting of the Steering Committee with UNDP.

*Adoption of the Summary Record of Proceedings*

86. The record was adopted.

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**UNDP OPENING REMARKS**

**Mr. Toily Kurbanov, Deputy Resident Representative  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Fiji**

**Pacific Island Oceanic Fisheries Management Project**

Apia, Samoa, Friday 17 October 2008

Director General of the Forum Fisheries Agency,  
Esteemed participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting of the Oceanic  
Fisheries Project

Ladies and gentlemen,

For many of you, the meeting is part of week long events and discussions on various issues important for development in the Pacific. Therefore we in UNDP warmly appreciate your commitment and making your time available. It is important that you at the meeting provide us with the feedback and guidance on the project priorities and at the same time make sure that the project itself and decisions that are going to be made produce tangible benefits for your countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, this month one year ago we had our last meeting of the steering committee. The year since then has brought us many new challenges in the Pacific and the rest of the world – rising food prices create inflationary impacts and affect household budgets, oil prices (even though stabilized recently) make transportation of people and goods more expensive and of course as the community level, we continue to feel increasing impact of climate change. But Pacific peoples and communities are resilient and in the middle of all this communities seize new opportunities as witnessed over the last year: there is new emphasis on sustaining livelihoods all across the region, many countries with renewed energy started to encourage local food production, there's also now renewed attention to strengthen national fisheries. It is all these developments that provide context to the activities of the Oceanic Fisheries Management Project and, in a way, sets the scene for today and tomorrow's discussions.

First and foremost, together with you, we are looking forward to review and discuss the project's annual report. As you may have noted from the text distributed, the project has made strong progress on some fronts but there are also, as anywhere, areas for improvement.

Secondly, we should be able to take a step back from monthly, quarterly and annual reports and have a look at what the project has or has not achieved over a longer period of time, since its beginning. For that we are pleased to share with you the results of independent mid term project evaluation. Along with the report and its findings, we will also discuss UNDP's commentary to the report and proposed action points, which is referred to in the agenda as management response.

There will be also discussions of other important sessions on the agenda. I'm sure this will be time well spent and at the end of the meeting we will make decisions that will ensure the project's progress and delivery of tangible benefits for the Pacific. Before concluding I'd like to thank the project team and FFA as the executing agent for thorough preparations for the meeting.

Thank you.

**4<sup>th</sup> Regional Steering Committee Meeting of the Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project, 17 – 18 October 2008, Apia, Samoa**

**Opening Address of the Director General of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency**

Talofa lava and welcome to Samoa,

It gives me great pleasure to address you this morning and to warmly welcome you to the fourth meeting of the Regional Steering Committee for the Pacific Islands Oceanic Fisheries Management Project.

I am sure you will join with me in thanking that Samoan Government and officials for hosting not only this Steering Committee meeting but all the meetings held this week and those to be held next week. It's a rather congested and tiring period of fisheries meetings, particularly for those of you who came straight to Apia from the Commission TCC meeting in Pohnpei. For those of you that may not normally attend Commission related meetings or any of the other FFA fisheries gatherings, I hope you will take advantage of the opportunity provided to you through this project to attend other meetings held this and next week.

Please let me acknowledge your presence as the focal points and national representatives to this project, officials from UNDP as the Implementing Agency for the project and the co-chair of this Steering Committee, staff of the FFA, SPC and IUCN as executing agencies and observers which I believe includes representatives attending on behalf of regional environmental NGOs and the Pacific Tuna Industry Association. Welcome.

Allow me to be retrospective and remind you all of the reasons this project evolved. The Global Environment Facility responded supportively to the Pacific small islands developing countries concerns for unsustainable use of the targeted transboundary oceanic fish stocks of the Pacific region and inter-related issues such as non-target fish stocks, other species of interest such as marine mammals, seabirds and turtles, fishing around seamounts, impacts on food webs and biodiversity.

GEF acknowledged that the threats to the sustainable use of the region's oceanic fish resources had two root causes; one a lack of understanding of the resources; and secondly a weaknesses in governance. For the last three years the project has delivered on a wide number of activities that have contributed to the improvement of understanding the oceanic fish stocks and to supporting the FFA member countries in their part to establish the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and to address their own national fisheries governance arrangements.

The GEF grant has been timely, and without it, Pacific countries would certainly have found that keeping pace with the Commission and its demands overwhelming. It remains a challenging arena in any case and one that will continue to require Pacific countries to find strength in close collaboration but not without assistance from international funding sources and regional organisations.

We do need to know how effective this assistance has been and what impact the project has had on progress towards good governance and better understanding of the Pacific fish stocks. Regular monitoring and evaluation are critical parts of the

management of a any project but especially one of this size. Close to 11 million US dollars over a five year period is not unsubstantial. Each year you would have reviewed annual reports in the prescribed GEF/UNDP formats and overseen budgetary issues and this year is no exception. They may appear detailed but they are good records of progress, or non-progress for that matter, as are the brief national reports that you yourself prepare each year.

The first of three annual reviews, not to be confused with the annual reports, has been completed for the Project. The objective of these reviews is to highlight specific issues, difficulties or problems in the implementation of the project not identified in the annual; reports which may affect the projects objectives. The reviews must make suggestions to address these issues. You will have received the first the three annual review reports that will be produced during the life of the project very early in the year. It was thought prudent to provide you with another opportunity to comment on the review and also to have it available along side the Mid-Term Review.

You will have noticed that more meeting time than usual is set aside this year for you. The additional task this year is for the Steering Committee to consider the Mid-term Review of the project. The review has been completed under the guidance of UNDP using independent consultants. It conforms to GEF and UNDP requirements and will be presented to this meeting by UNDP and the lead consultant Dr Leon Zann later in the program. I would urge you to provide meaningful feedback on the outcomes of the review, and to also consider the comments provided by UNDP on those outcomes and recommendations. I am pleased to note that overall the review is favourable and the consultants consider that the: *“The OFM Project is rated as generally very effective in its design, methodologies, activities and outcomes”*. Consider carefully please, all the recommendations at this juncture. I think we can be proud of the progress made to date but it isn't completely accurate to say it is picture perfect. Therefore we have the opportunity before us to make the adjustments, consider if what the project delivers is sustainable; and what future strategies need to be developed to ensure sustainability.

As the name of this Committee implies, your agenda over the next two days focuses on steering the project in the right direction. You will consider reports of progress and deal with financial matters and work plans; and will also take the time to discuss forward looking matters. We look forward to your active participation in discussions.

At this point I would like to take the opportunity to thank you as project focal points for assuming the additional task of over seeing the project activities and your national interests, the staff at FFA and SPC for their roles in delivering activities and UNDP and GEF professionals for their involvement in the progress the project has made to date. It's also gratifying to see that the refined work plan that forms IUCN's contribution to project has been developed and is well under way after unfortunate delays beyond their control. We now look forward to reaping the benefits of understanding the effects of pelagic fishing on seamounts in our region as part of the project work directed towards ecosystems analysis.

I think I have taken enough of your time this morning. Just let me say again that I appreciate the effort of everyone involved in this project and that I wish you well with deliberations over the next two days.

ADOPTED AGENDA

- a. Opening of Meeting
- b. Apologies
- c. Adoption of Agenda
  1. Annual reports
    - UNDP/GEF Annual Project Report (APR), Project Implementation Report (PIR)
    - GEF IW Results Framework Report
    - Annual Review 2007
  2. Implementation reporting
    - Presentations (project activities) by Executing Agencies
    - National Project Reports
  3. Financial reporting, work plans and budgets
  4. Mid-term Project Review (presentation of the final report by UNDP and the consultant)
  5. Project sustainability and follow-up
  6. Other matters
- d. Next Meeting Adoption of Agenda
- e. Adoption of the Summary Record of Proceedings
- f. Close of the meeting