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YOUR QUICK GUIDE
TO WCPFC ISSUES
IN 2008**



ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED & UNKNOWN FISHING VESSEL LIST

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Illegal fishing costs millions a year in lost revenue – in Papua New Guinea alone an estimated around US\$18 million was being lost as a result of purse seine and longline vessels underreporting and illegally crossing into its waters. In the establishment of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), it was decided only vessels flagged to countries which are Members of the commission can fish in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. One of the tools to identify and sanction fishing vessels not part of this system is provision of a list of these vessels to all participants at the WCPFC.

The WCPFC Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Vessel List is essentially a list of banned fishing vessels in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. In 2007, the WCPFC specified what conditions can lead to listing of a fishing vessel on the IUU list: a vessel not on the WCPFC record of fishing vessels or not licensed to fish in the area, a vessel that fishes illegally inside the waters of a Commission Member, a vessel that does not report catches accurately, a vessel that does not follow the WCPFC rules of fishing (including closed areas or landing juvenile fish) and a fishing vessel that offloads its catch onto an IUU vessel.

At this year's Technical and Compliance Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) meeting, Tonga pursued its bid to get Taiwanese fishing vessel F/V Chu Huai No.638 placed on the WCPFC IUU List. It was detected to be fishing in Tonga by a New Zealand P3 Orion aircraft on 28 January 2008. Reports indicate it had been fishing without a licence from 15 to 28 January for a period of 13 days. Chinese Taipei suspended the fishing licence of the vessel for 3 months, the fishing licence of the captain for 6 months and required him to return to Chinese Taipei for training. However, Tonga does not consider this adequate severity for this violation of sovereign rights. According to the national law of Tonga, 3 offences were committed and amounted to a fine of 2.5 million Tongan paanga. In this way, the case is also a test case on whether the Commission will rule in favour of a nation's sovereign right to determine what exactly 'adequate' prosecution for offences is.

WHY IT HAS COME UP NOW?

A decision about whether or not to add the Taiwanese fishing vessel F/V Chu Huai No.638 to the WCPFC's IUU list must be made at the December WCPFC 5 meeting in Busan, Korea.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT PACIFIC ISLANDS?

At the technical committee meeting, FFA members voiced their strong support for Tonga to achieve listing of the vessel on the WCPFC's provisional IUU list. It was noted by the Chair of the technical committee that 6 countries (including 1 speaking on behalf of the 17 FFA members) also supported the listing of this vessel. The record of the Special 68th Forum Fisheries Committee in Apia, Samoa, also indicated the support of all FFA countries for Tonga's bid to add this fishing vessel to the list.

WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THIS YEAR'S WCPFC?

Decisions will be made about whether to add vessels on the provisional list to the permanent list will be made at the December WCPFC 5 meeting in Busan, Korea.

When: Agenda Item No 7, *Technical and Compliance Issues*, is scheduled to be discussed in the afternoon of Monday 8th December.

WHERE DO I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

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The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) has reports on www.ffa.int/wcpfc