

PACIFIC ISLANDS
FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY

ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2019-2020
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



4th FFA

Celebrating 40 years of Cooperation



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Celebrating 40 years of Cooperation

FFA'S VISION STATEMENT

“Our people enjoying the greatest possible social and economic benefits from the sustainable use of offshore fisheries resources.”

FFA'S CORPORATE MISSION

“Empowering FFA Members to take collective and national action for the sustainable use of offshore fisheries resources”

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL



Dr Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen
Director-General

It is an honour to present the 2019/20 Annual Report of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. This report comes to you during a period of historic global challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In our tuna fisheries sector, the pandemic has significantly affected the longline fishery and fresh tuna markets, with flow-on impacts on the economic benefits that Members obtain.

All our primary markets have been interrupted, including the EU, US, and Japan, as well as our major fishing States China, US, Japan, and Korea. Member countries have avoided the severe levels of virus outbreaks experienced elsewhere – largely through early and decisive action to close borders and reduce commercial activity to limit the virus' spread – but the economic stresses brought on by these developments continue to be felt.

These events coincide with an increased importance of tuna fisheries for Pacific economies, given the devastating damage that COVID-19 has imposed on other sectors such as tourism. The pandemic makes it even more important to ensure that fisheries continue to function, and that economic and social benefits are sustainably maximised, for economic development and food security.

Immediate operational issues related to observers and transshipment took precedence, as well as preparations if the pandemic reached our shores. Four key actions followed: (i) temporary suspension of the requirement to carry an observer on a purse seine vessel (ii) port States determining the

areas and conditions for transshipment at sea by purse seine vessels, (iii) temporary suspension of the requirement for an observer to monitor transshipment on vessels other than purse seine vessels on the high seas, and (iv) in consultation with Australia's Department of Defence, temporary suspension of the Aerial Surveillance Programme.

While COVID-19 absorbed the Agency's time and resources, we maintained momentum on FFA's broader work programme, including key priorities such as the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, Regional Longline Strategy, and responses to climate change.

The Secretariat is progressing the new outcomes-based Strategic Plan, including scoping specific tasks and change management requirements. The Plan will deliver a Secretariat that meets Members' evolving expectations of best practice and cost-efficiency. This is consistent with our stated mission to empower Members to sustainably utilise their tuna fisheries.

Over the last 12 months, we have also made good progress on an action plan for the Regional Longline Strategy. The resources and timeframes put in place as part of this work will ensure we stay on track with key steps, such as the adoption of zone-based limits.

Responses to climate change remain at the forefront of our efforts. One key initiative in FY 2019/20 was a dedicated session between FFA, Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office (PNAO) and Council of



Judicial Symposium Participants - August 2019.

Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) Partners to understand how to better engage the international community on the impacts of global warming on fisheries. This continued collaboration will enable the Pacific region to speak with a united voice. Another key initiative is the adoption of the Resolution on Climate Change at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). The next step is to ensure that the Commission actively factors in the impact of climate change in its work.

Growing our resilience

For all its issues, the pandemic has enabled us to step back and reset, creating a platform for FFA to become a more resilient organisation. As I noted during the 114th Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC114) Officials meeting in June, a crisis provides an opportunity to do things we couldn't do before.

For example, travel restrictions have resulted in Members and the Secretariat working differently. As remote work has become the norm, so too have more flexible work arrangements and modes of meeting. The migration to virtual platforms has propelled technology investment and operational changes that will outlast the virus.

We have also identified significant scope to strengthen FFA's Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) framework, through tools such as contact tracing of specific vessels, artificial intelligence and machine learning.

The agreement at FFC114 for an Electronic Monitoring (EM) Policy for the Regional Longline Fishery was another key development in 2019-20. The suspension of the observer programme magnified the importance of establishing EM as a key tool for enabling Members to receive independent verifiable data on vessel activities and estimated catch. Trials have taken place for some countries. It is now critical to focus on what is required to implement this policy for all Members, including a costed work plan.

The suspension of the observer programme saw FFA reflect on how to best utilise and protect observers into the future. As a result, FFC114 agreed to a study to more effectively safeguard observers and their livelihoods, as well as to develop new health protocols for use on vessels at sea and in port.

Most critically during this pandemic, we have seen a rise in unemployment and loss of family income. This has underlined the importance of tuna fisheries resources not only for economic development but also food security. Given the current difficulties with sending products to the Japanese and US markets, the Secretariat is exploring ways to facilitate more access to tuna markets in Australia and New Zealand.

Additionally, the Secretariat is investigating how tuna fisheries and associated industries can increase their contribution to food security. This will include studies such as how much tuna enters local markets due to transshipment activity and what the impacts of COVID-19 are on female employment in our sector.

Embracing the new normal

In my first Annual Report 2018/19, I made four objectives central to our work: maintaining regional solidarity, maximising economic returns, enhancing social benefits, and combatting IUU fishing. The events of this year have made these objectives more critical than ever if FFA is to prosper in a post-pandemic world.

2020 has shown us that through our continued cooperation, we can adapt quickly by finding new ways to work, adopting new technologies and fostering new partnerships. Post-pandemic, it will not be business as usual, so the challenge in 2021 will be to maintain an innovative mindset.

Getting together face to face will always be important, to nurture the valuable relationships that make our work possible. However, so many benefits are arising from the changes we have made over the last six months that we should embrace into the future. The Secretariat looks forward to supporting Members on this transformative journey.

As we look to the year ahead, FFA's many strengths position us well to deliver on the goals we've set. The commitment of Members to having a positive economic and social impact on the Pacific communities we serve represents one of our greatest attributes as an organisation.

While the challenges before us are undoubtedly complex - and made more so by the extremely difficult geopolitical climate in which we are operating - the cooperation of Members is driving important progress on matters such as fisheries development, climate change, labour standards, IUU fishing and the Regional Longline Strategy, among others.

The achievements of the last 12 months set out in this Annual Report demonstrate FFA's capacity to be greater than the sum of its parts, no matter what circumstances we face. The report is an opportunity to reflect both on progress made and on the work ahead.

Our skills as leaders, managers, professionals and administrators will be tested in the months ahead perhaps more than at any other time in FFA's history. Nevertheless, our capacity to step up, no



DG with Australian Assistant Minister of Forestry and Fisheries, Senator the Hon. J. Duniam.

matter what the challenge, means that important outcomes are within reach for FFA during 2020-21.

We acknowledge and thank our development partners, in particular Australia and New Zealand, for their ongoing confidence and support towards the work of our Members and the Secretariat. The substantial monetary and in-kind assistance is vital to the implementation of our approved Statement of Intent and related FY 2019/20 Annual Work Program and Budget, and preparation for the execution of our new Strategic Plan.

Additionally, the success of FFA is only made possible through the support of, and collaboration with, our Members. The Secretariat expresses its sincere gratitude to Members for the trust in our work and for the spirit of cooperation that prevails in our work together, especially during these challenging times.

I especially thank the Deputy Director-General Matthew Hooper, the Directors and the staff for their hard work and dedication to the work of FFA. I remain humbled to serve with our team.

I commend this Annual Report to Members and other stakeholders. The Secretariat team commits to professionalism of the highest order and looks forward to serving you into the next year and beyond.

Dr Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen
Director-General



HIGHLIGHTS



FFC Ministerial July 2019.

Implementing our new Strategic Plan 2020-25

The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan will be the most significant operational blueprint for FFA over the coming years, so we were pleased to officially start the new Plan on 1 July 2020. Its commencement was preceded by work to ensure the necessary support and processes were in place, including external support to help scope and plan specific implementation tasks. Work to align the Statement of Intent to the new Plan was placed before FFC Officials in June 2020. Also during that month, the Strategic Plan Reference Group reviewed the Secretariat's progress in implementing the Plan. As part of this process, the Reference Group proposed a Programme Office to oversee implementation activities.

Other progress occurred with a workshop to discuss how engagement between Members and the Secretariat could be strengthened through improvements to Country Service Level Agreements.



Addressing the impacts of Climate Change

Leaders in their 2019 Annual session have reaffirmed climate change as the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security, and wellbeing of Pacific peoples.

Ministers welcomed the priority that the FFA is placing on work to understand and manage impacts on the region's tuna stocks, and have called for increased investment in science and research. Ministers also strongly supported the key work areas identified by the Secretariat for responding to climate change with key partners including: work on adaptive management regimes; securing of baselines and associated maritime boundaries in the face of sea-level rise; and the importance of ensuring tuna stocks are managed at levels that continue to support the food security of Pacific Island communities.

In addition to progressing these priority work areas, the Secretariat initiated a dedicated meeting for our Members with key partners such as PNAO, SPC, SPREP, PIFS, and USP to understand the broader context within which the fisheries discussions take place. This collaboration will ensure that fisheries issues are advocated actively and collectively in international meetings.

Furthermore, at WCPFC 16, FFA Members successfully initiated and promoted the adoption of a resolution on climate change as it relates to Pacific tuna fisheries and the work of the Commission. While the resolution is non-binding, it provides a solid base on which to build and to ensure that the Commission actively factors in the impact of climate change in its work.



HRH Prince Charles Visit to FFA - viewing of the Regional Surveillance Fisheries Centre (RFSC).

Advancing the Contribution of the Fisheries Sector

It is very pleasing to note that during the last 12 months, the goals set out under the Regional Roadmap for Fisheries continue to largely be achieved.

The sustainability goal was accomplished with all four main tuna stocks of the Western & Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) being 'in the green', that is, all stocks were not overfished nor was overfishing occurring. The WCPO is the only region for which this is the case for tuna. As reflected in the 2019 Tuna Fishery Report Card concerning the economic goals all indicators continued to show a positive growth trend.

The tuna fisheries of the WCPO remain a significant, and in some cases the most substantial, contributor to the economies of FFA Members. The catch taken by fleets flagged or chartered to FFA Members continues to grow and reached nearly 940,000 metric tonnes in 2019 with an estimated value of \$US1.7 billion.

In addition, fleets flagged or chartered to FFA Members caught almost half of the total tuna catch taken in the waters of FFA members compared with around one third just five years ago. In 2018, government revenue from access fees was around \$US550 million while processing volumes, exports and employment in tuna related sectors continued to grow.

However, it is important to note there are substantial variations in the benefits enjoyed by FFA Members as a result of differences in resource endowments, management regimes and areas of comparative advantage for the development of their fisheries resources. In recognition of this, the Tuna Fisheries Report Card this year included additional commentary and data reflecting outcomes at the fishery and national level.

For its part, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant challenges, particularly with regard to the longline fishery and fresh tuna markets and will likely have a significant impact on the level of economic benefits that Members obtain from the fishery going forward. At the same time given the impacts of COVID-19 on other sectors of national economies, the economic importance of tuna fisheries is likely to increase.

Achieving Food Security

Food security is a major emerging issue for the region and the Secretariat continues to work on quantifying the contribution of tuna to food security. FFC114 agreed on a comprehensive study during FY 2020/21 to investigate options to increase the contribution of tuna to food security. Other studies will include how much tuna enters local markets due to transshipment activity and what are the impacts of COVID-19 on female employment in our sector. The Secretariat will also carry out work to understand and measure the social benefits associated with tuna fisheries in the region.



FFC Chair, Eugene Pangelian and DG. Dr. Tupou-Roosen awaiting arrival of HRH Prince of Wales.

Promoting FFA Member interests within the WCPFC

Promoting Members' rights and interests and ensuring WCPFC outcomes are not disproportionately burdensome on Small Island Developing States remains an important objective for FFA.

At WCPFC16, FFA achieved some notable results. These included:

- revision of the work plan on the Harvest Strategy and endorsement for the development of a multispecies approach;
- agreement on FFA's proposal to reform the WCPFC Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS);
- a commitment to reinvigorate the south Pacific albacore roadmap for which Fiji accepted the leadership role;
- a conservation and management measure on mobulid rays prohibiting CCMs from targeting or retaining mobulid rays caught in the Convention Area; and
- a Resolution on climate change, including consideration of the impacts of climate change on fish stocks and the economies of SIDS, supporting the development of relevant science, and reducing the carbon footprint of the Commission and its activities. This is the first tuna RFMO to adopt such a resolution on climate change.

The Secretariat has commenced work with SPC to assist Members to improve their understanding of the complex process and methodologies required for multispecies Harvest Strategies.

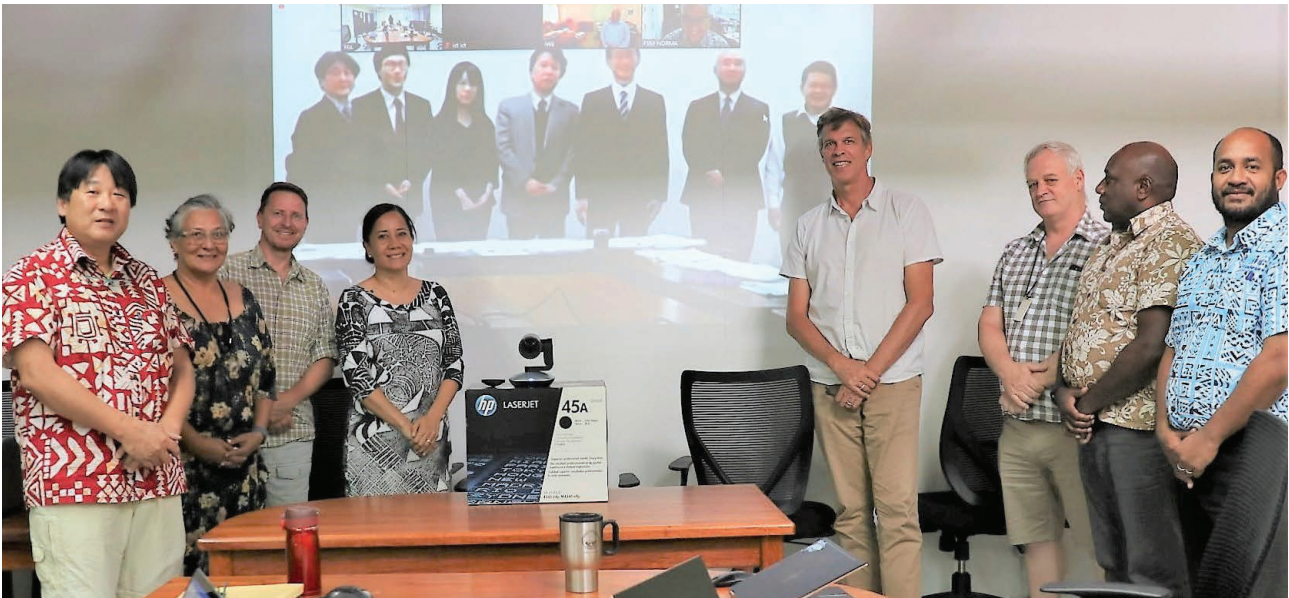
Reforming the CMS process was one of the hardest issues discussed at WCPFC16. This was a significant achievement for FFA Members as the WCPFC Compliance Monitoring process remains the strongest of all the tuna RFMOs. FFA Members continue to perform well as compared to non-FFA developing state CCMs at WCPFC, and better than many developed countries.

Strengthening national frameworks and capability

Supporting members to strengthen their regulatory frameworks and national aspirations as well as enhancing national capability remain a key priority for the Secretariat.

i. Country Service Level Agreements -

Progress on the development of more comprehensive CSLAs with Members has, at least in part, been driven by FFA Members who have sought FFA's involvement in national level planning processes involving different partners and projects. These exercises, including with Samoa and Tonga, have helped ensure that FFA's support to these Members is firmly rooted in national strategies accompanied by coordination and coherence with other partners and donors in relation to national level work.



JPF Committee Virtual Meeting - February 2020 JPF Committee Virtual Meeting - February 2020.

This work will be taken forward in the redesign of our engagement with Members on the development of CSLAs.

ii. Reviews of National Legislations - In 2019, the Secretariat progressed legislative drafting assistance for five Member countries. Besides legislative drafting, work has progressed in the review of national legislations, including for specific aspects such as reviews against responsibilities arising under the NTSA.

iii. Maritime Boundaries - The Secretariat has supported ongoing maritime boundaries work in three Member countries through legal and technical assistance.

In 2019, a paper on sea-level rise and international law with an emphasis on maritime boundaries was submitted to the Forum Secretariat.

Support to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on the legal basis for perpetual recognition in international law of formalised boundaries commenced in 2019 pursuant to the decision of Forum Leaders.

iv. Review of Tuna Management and Development Plans and Policies - During the financial year, the Secretariat worked with four Member countries on policy reviews and drafted their Management and Development Plans. Work was undertaken on Tuna Management and Development Plans for two Members with draft plans close to being finalised.

v. Enhancing capacity - A large portion of the Secretariat's resources is dedicated to enhancing capability at the national level to ensure the effectiveness of systems and processes as well as understanding the knowledge to address offshore fisheries issues. The Regional Training framework had 30 Fisheries Officers graduate from USP Pacific TAFE with Certificate IV Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance and two FFA staff graduate from FIT College with the Cert IV Training and Assessment qualification. Two PIRFO courses were also accredited by the SPC Education Quality and Assessment Program.

Other courses delivered for Members included the development of skills and knowledge of MCS operators ranging from Observers, Debriefers, Coordinators, national MCS personnel and VMS Operators through to legal officers, and judges.

In August 2019 a Judicial Symposium jointly hosted by the Secretariat and the Solomon Islands Chief Justice, Sir Albert Palmer, was successful, with a number of judges including CJs and legal experts attending from around the region and internationally. The theme was "Responsibility in Fisheries" and the Symposium provided the judiciary with an opportunity to share knowledge of international and national fisheries law, applicable conventions and related issues to better understand IUU fishing cases coming before them.

The Secretariat continues to be actively engaged in the delivery of the Pacific Fisheries Leadership Programme (PFLP) as part of the consortium led by SPC. The programme aims to improve the quality and diversity of leadership and management in priority sectoral areas and ensure increased cooperation between relevant participants and their institutions within the fisheries sector.

The Leadership for Change course was delivered in August 2019 and attracted 20 participants from the fisheries sectors across the region to share, learn, and be equipped with practical and theoretical guidance on leadership and management in the fisheries context. In February 2020, a second cohort consisting of 23 fisheries leaders participated in the Leadership for Effectiveness. Integral to the success of the programme are the coaching sessions that link the modules.

Combating IUU fishing and contributing to regional security initiatives

Monitoring and Surveillance

There has been continuous improvement in MCS both at the regional and national level, reflecting Members' uptake of the existing MCS arrangements and tools, together with the Secretariat's proactive trialling of new technologies in collaboration with partners.

Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring (ER and EM) have significant potential to strengthen MCS through timely reporting and independent monitoring and is a key work area for the Secretariat and Members. ER is implemented widely among the membership. As agreed at FFC114, we continue to expand on this progressively to achieve 100% adoption for fishing vessels operating in EEZs and the high seas by 2022. Also as agreed at FFC114, this work will take into account the need to cater for special circumstances of small domestic vessels operating solely within EEZs.

EM has also been implemented and trialed by some Members. Over the last year, the Secretariat, in collaboration with SPC and PNAO, commenced work on developing a regional EM policy. It was endorsed by Members at FFC114 and work to implement the policy will continue into 2021, including a costed workplan. In parallel, the Secretariat and members are also involved in the on-going discussion at the WCPFC fora on setting the EM framework for the WCPO.

The Secretariat engaged with partners to explore emerging technologies that enhance analytics. Technologies being discussed and will be trialed in 2020-2021 include:

- Machine learning tools with OceanMind;
- IUU fishing analysis with CSIRO; and
- Dark vessel Detection tools with Canada Department of Fisheries and Ocean.



New Zealand High Commissioner and delegation visit - at the RFSC.

The Secretariat has trialled and implemented Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) and remote sensing technology with Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology and through a SAR service provider.

In early 2020, due to the priority placed on the health of observers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we temporarily suspended observer coverage on purse seine vessels and observer coverage requirements for transshipment at sea. The Secretariat has worked with the American Tunaboat Association, in close consultation with national observer programmes, to successfully facilitate the safe repatriation of observers that have been placed under the US Treaty.

As part of the COVID-19 responses and recovery measures, the Secretariat continues to assist Members in several areas including monitoring and surveillance support through contact tracing of specific vessels, identifying possible transshipments and bunker proximity contacts, monitoring and reporting VMS/AIS tracks of potential IUU activity, and supported national tasks for surface assets.

Implementation of Regional Initiatives

The **Regional MCS Strategy (RMCSS)** continues to provide clear policy focus for FFA's MCS activities until 2023. This is the second year of implementation and the majority of activities are underway (nationally and/or regionally), with some activities such as training and capacity development already showing strong uptake. The effectiveness of the RMCSS in addressing IUU fishing will be better understood after work on an update of the IUU quantification study in the second half of 2020.

The **multilateral Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA)** provides a framework for sharing resources and information for both fisheries and broader law enforcement purposes. Members' uptake of the NTSA has been steadily increasing, with the continued focus on the operationalisation of the Agreement. The Secretariat has conducted a number of workshops to enhance Members' understanding on the Agreement and successfully trialled the information system that supports the Agreement. Members who are NTSA Parties have

gradually operationalised the Agreement through bilateral fisheries operations. The Secretariat will be working closely with Members to ensure greater utilisation of the NTSA throughout the coming year.

Despite several challenges, the **Aerial Surveillance Program (ASP)** continued successfully in 2019, being the first full year both King Air aircrafts have operated together. This was a clear reflection of the successful cooperation between FFA, Australia Department of Defence (ADoD), the contractor Technology Service Corporation (TSC) and respective Members Air Tasking Officers. Some highlights from 2019 operations include:

- the aircraft achieved around 1,370 hours with 14 of the 15 Members benefitting from the program;
- 195 missions were undertaken in 14 Members EEZs with 791 sightings confirmed;
- six of the vessels sighted were deemed to be potential IUU violations;
- the aircraft was only unavailable 4% of 2019;
- no non-fisheries related surveillance requests received;
- most of the surveillance resulted from the FFA offering aerial surveillance rather than requested; and
- six MoUs were signed in 2019.

Operations commenced as normal in early 2020, however as a result of COVID-19 situation, operations were temporarily suspended in March 2020 to 30 June 2020.

The **Regional PSM Framework** was developed by the Secretariat, Members and partners throughout 2019. It provides guidance to FFA Members in developing minimum PSM standards to be applied at national level, promoting inter-agency cooperation and coordination, and improving data and information exchange. The Framework was discussed in various FFA meetings and endorsed by FFC. This positive progress will assist FFA members to establish efficient but rigorous **Port State measures**, and in driving the development of regional minimum standards for **Catch Documentation**. Both of these activities are supported by the New Zealand Government and will be essential for maintaining access for Pacific Island tuna products to major export markets.



DG alongside the Tuvalu Minister of Natural Resources Dr Puaken Boreham.

The Secretariat continued to keep abreast of regional security developments relating to **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**. These developments included:

- participating in the *Boe Declaration* process through the Forum Officials Committee on Regional Security;
- participating in discussions around the development of a Pacific Fusion Centre;
- participating in consultations by Australia Pacific Security College on regional security needs; and
- Attendance and brief to the South West Pacific Heads of Maritime Forces meeting and the Pacific Islands Chief of Police Conference on FFA's work in combating IUU fishing, including the Aerial Surveillance Program. The meetings noted the value of the work of the FFC and its critical relationship to maritime security.

The Secretariat's active participation in these regional security development is ongoing and will continue to do so with a view to: raising the profile of FFA;

- ensuring FFA's mandate is not encroached upon;
- ensuring existing FFA processes and mechanisms are not duplicated but complemented; and
- monitoring opportunities for potential synergy with related agencies.

This engagement recognises the relevance of the existing regional fisheries frameworks, systems and tools for information sharing across a broader range of law enforcement purposes. Ensuring this work remains fully in accordance with information sharing protocols and the principles of the **FFA Information Security Management System (ISMS)** is a key priority.

Progressing a Longline Strategy

A workshop with all members was held in October 2019 to develop the Action Plan for the Regional Longline Strategy. The Action Plan is to operationalise the regional Strategy through identified actions and targets, key people to lead the implementations of actions and proposed timelines. The Action Plan draft was discussed by Members at FFC114. Members' feedback has been incorporated into the final draft for consideration and endorsement shortly at FFC115.

Additionally in October 2019, a workshop was held to develop a Regional Electronic Monitoring (EM) policy which was subsequently adopted by FFC114 in June 2020. The policy was agreed to focus solely on the longline fishing vessels which currently have very low coverage of human observers thus with very low data to verify log-sheets by vessel captains and in particular addressing the absence of high seas fisheries data.



US Delegation Visit.

Assistance was provided to the South Pacific Group participants in May 2020 through the preparation of a draft MOU to support the group's endeavours. The group intends to improve their cooperation through establishing South Pacific Albacore limits and looking at opportunities to fully utilise these limits to improve the economics of the SPA fisheries that they are very dependent on.

The South Pacific Longline Project funded by the New Zealand Government enabled past meetings of the Tokelau Arrangement parties to discuss management objectives and strategies for the South Pacific Longline Fisheries. These Parties also met in October 2019 to discuss catch trajectory scenarios analysed by the SPC for achieving the South Pacific Albacore Target Reference Point that had been adopted by WCPFC.

Advancing Fisheries Development

Improving Labour Standards

Work in this area during 2019 focused on the Regional Minimum Terms and Conditions (MTCs) for employment of vessel crews, noting FFC114 had agreed that Members would make best endeavours to give domestic effect to these MTCs by 1 January 2020.

A range of work carried out on implementation of human rights and crewing conditions at a national level. Three Members completed their work, with one finalising a crewing policy and

Regulations, a second Member implementing by way of Regulations, and a third inserting a licensing condition on labour standards. Draft policies and Regulations have been prepared for two other Members to be progressed over the coming months.

A draft project using New Zealand funding was developed and it is hoped that further funds will become available in the first half of the 2020/21 financial year.

Additionally, a conference for Maritime Colleges was held by the Secretariat to share details of the MTCs and their direct effects on crews.

Market access

The interest of Members in establishing EU-certified Competent Authorities (CAs) continues to grow, as does demand for the Secretariat's assistance to respond to requirements of both EU and non-EU markets. The regional concepts previously explored have now been adjusted to reflect the preferences of Members for national authorities with direct involvement of their officers. The Secretariat is working closely with Members to assist their development of CAs.

WTO Members have committed to agreeing to new rules by 2020 that will limit harmful fishing subsidies, although the Ministerial conference of the WTO was suspended due to COVID-19. The Secretariat has been working with the PIFS Geneva office to coordinate a Pacific response relevant to the direct interests of the Pacific Islands fisheries sector.



DG with the FSM President Panuelo.

Joint Ventures

There has been a growth in joint ventures with foreign fishing companies as Members seek to diversify income streams and create domestic employment opportunities, both in harvesting and processing. The Secretariat currently provides advice and resources to Members wishing to establish new fisheries joint ventures, and ongoing support to existing ventures including reviews, governance or legal support, where requested.

There remain some adverse actions on the part of joint venture partners, including failure to meet obligations as contained in the relevant agreements. In some cases, joint ventures are resulting in insolvency and litigation. While there can be various reasons for such outcomes, there is a clear need for Members to improve their governance and oversight of joint venture arrangements, to ensure the success and sustainability of the joint venture.

Other activities to assist in corporate governance and management of operators in the fisheries industry include a proposed training of Board of Directors to better understand their roles and the creation of a Panel of experienced industry practitioners to provide guidance and support. Due to COVID-19, Director training has been postponed. Work on the Panel of Experts is ongoing and will be progressed in FY 2020/21.

Economic analyses

The Secretariat continues to collect and disseminate economic data and undertake economic analyses to assist Members in decision-making at the national, subregional and regional levels. This work ranges from analysis of limits under national management plans, impacts of marine area closures and economic conditions in the major tuna fisheries to trade-offs under potential target reference points (TRPs) for the main tuna stocks and reviews of national licensing policies.

The Secretariat is also enhancing capacity in the area of economic analysis and its application to fisheries. To this end, six national training workshops were undertaken in 2019 and early 2020. The advanced economics training regional workshop was postponed due to the pandemic and will take place as soon as practicable in FY 2020/21.



FFA staff marching in the International Womens Day 2020.

Removing barriers to female participation

As part of FFA's commitment to removing barriers to female participation in the fisheries sector, FFA has contracted the International Finance Corporation (part of the World Bank Group) under a Project Services Agreement. The first deliverable is financial literacy training to reduce absenteeism, improve productivity and save overtime costs. To date, eight processing companies in Member countries have been invited to participate in this initiative, two of which have confirmed their involvement.

Due to capacity issues resulting from staffing gaps, work on the Gender Equity framework was not progressed until very late in the fiscal year. Planning started during FY 2019/20 on the Offshore fisheries component of the SPC Pacific Handbook for Gender Equity and Social Inclusion by commissioning studies to better understand the role of women in Pacific offshore fisheries. Training for FFA staff to mainstream gender will be conducted early in FY 2020/21.

Additional assistance from the Government of Australia for funding other gender initiatives, including a Gender Forum in the new fiscal year has been provided.

Creating Stronger Partnerships

The Secretariat continues to recognise the paramount importance of its partnership with Members, both individually and collectively. We are also mindful of the shared responsibilities and complementarity of efforts with other fisheries stakeholders including regional leaders, regional CROP agencies, donor partners, international organisations, NGOs and fishing partners. With the profile of Pacific fisheries enhanced as a result of the growing interest in the sustainability of fisheries, these partnerships are an increasingly important component of the FFA's work as recognised in the 2020-2025 FFA Strategic Plan. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlights the need for effective collaboration with all partners to effectively achieve the goals of FFA.

Pacific leaders recognised the geopolitical nature of fisheries in their decision to elevate fisheries as a standing item at the annual Leaders Forum meeting. This provides a clear avenue for fisheries issues to be considered by Leaders. The Forum Leaders endorsed the Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (RFMM) which also allows for collaboration with CROP partners on the wider fisheries-related issues (such as coastal fisheries and cross-cutting issues) which is presented to Leaders under this fisheries item.

Regular CROP Head and Deputy Head meetings facilitate coordination and strategic discussions on cross cutting issues such as climate change and marine pollution. One of the FFA's key



PEUMP Port State Measures Workshop with the Samoan Fisheries Division.

partnerships is with the SPC Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Environment Division who we maintain regular meetings with, including through an annual colloquium. FFA also participates at relevant CROP meetings including the Forum Sub-Committee on Regional Security and FOC Subcommittee on international Engagement and Advocacy.

At the subregional level the FFA continues to collaborate and support PNAO, through the coordination of and input into meeting briefs for members, participating at PNA meetings, and liaising with PNAO on shared issues of concern. Similarly, the FFA continues to support the emerging South Pacific Group on issues of common interest.

The value of the Strategic Mapping for the WCPFC process was recognised by Members in promoting alliances with fishing partners by providing a clear indication of aligned interests and opportunities for synergy with fishing partners on FFA priorities. Whilst this work has been focussed on fishing partners and WCPFC priorities, we have identified the potential value of extending this mapping process to all partners including international organisations and NGOs with interest (or potential interest) in Pacific fisheries. This will ensure a more coordinated approach in maintaining and strengthening of key partnerships with like-minded fisheries stakeholders.

The FFA continues to acknowledge the support of our development partners whose funding is instrumental in delivering the needs of our membership.

Managing efficiently and professionally

Ensuring the Secretariat is operating efficiently and professionally requires an appropriate organisational structure and role descriptions aligned to the new 2020-25 Strategic Plan. A draft staff capability framework at different bands has been prepared to guide the review of role descriptions.

The review of the financial system, in particular mapping of the chart of accounts to the outcomes of the Strategic Plan has commenced. Once completed, budgets and financial reports will be aligned to the six stated outcomes of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

Work on integrating finance, payroll and human resources systems has also commenced. This integration is expected to be the catalyst for change in Corporate Services and what it delivers. Regular internal audits of work processes ensure the alignment of practice, policies and regulations. In cases of a mismatch, closer inspection and discussions will ensue to determine cause and intention.

During the year, the Whistle-blower Policy was set up to encourage staff to come forward to report suspected acts of fraud, corruption and wrongdoing. Related Harassment and Grievance Policies which have been in place for some years were also socialised to remind staff of procedures for dealing with issues, if experienced in the workplace.



EU delegation visit.

Acknowledging assistance from Development Partners

Of our total FY 2019/20 approved budget of US\$33,228,945, a significant amount of US\$21,487,108 (65%) was received from our development partners. Not included in this amount are contributions in kind, such as the AU\$10m a year funded by the Australian Government to support the Regional Aerial Surveillance Programme (RASP), managed by FFA. This programme provides aerial surveillance service for 15 FFA Island Members.

Development partners include the governments of Australia, New Zealand, European Union, Japan, the World Bank, FAO, UNDP, GEF and PEW.

The Secretariat especially thanks our two metropolitan Members, Australia and New Zealand, for their ongoing support and flexible funding which has provided the Secretariat the ability to effectively resource and deliver the key programs/ results expected by the Membership. In total, New Zealand and Australia contributed a large portion of donor funding at 42% (US\$9,114,687) and 17% (US\$3,625,483) respectively.

For New Zealand, in addition to project funding for Information Technology, Economic Development, Industry Facilitation, Port State Measures and development of a Catch Documentation Scheme, the Leadership Programme and advancing the improved management of longline fisheries, funds to promote gender equality in the fishing Industry, support implementation of the FFA Strategic Plan and build a healthier infrastructure for the Headquarters were also provided. Additional funds were received from Australia to support gender initiatives in FY 2020/21, including a gender forum, pay audit and survey of the impact of COVID-19.

Other ongoing projects funded by Australia included supporting the implementation of the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA), the Regional Aerial Surveillance Programme and other activities remains essential.



Hon Tetabo Nakara, Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources Development of Kiribati and Dr Tupou-Roosen, Director General of FFA sign the Aerial Surveillance Memorandum of Understanding between Government of Kiribati and Forum Fisheries Agency.



FFC Chair - Eugene Pangelian delivering the Opening Address of the FFA 40th Anniversary Dinner. (November 2019)

The Secretariat also acknowledges the financial support of:

- the European Union (EU) through the Pacific-EU Marine Partnership (PEUMP) Programme which contributed US\$1,866,700 during the year
- the World Bank for funding the Pacific Regional Oceanscape Programme (PROP) which contributed US\$2,765,541 over the year to support the regional component of the programme managed by the Secretariat
- the Global Environment Facility and its implementing partners UNDP and FAO for the sustained support within the OFMP-2 Programme to address Climate Change, Ecosystem Based Approach to fisheries management and development, funding Member participation in key meetings and overall efforts to combat IUU fishing including through support for work on Electronic Monitoring and Electronic Reporting.
- Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation (OFCF) for its ongoing support for the Japan Promotion Fund, which during the year supported activities on capacity-building, maritime boundaries and industry initiatives.
- PEW for contributing to transshipment monitoring.

As part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025, the proposed work on a Resourcing Strategy and Funding Guidelines will ensure the better alignment and coordination of funding with the priorities and needs of Members. This will ensure that the Secretariat remains a proudly member-driven organisation.

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