



***Statement of Outcomes from the Sixteen Annual Session of the
Forum Fisheries Committee Ministers Meeting (FFC Min16)***

1. Ministers representing Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, met in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, on 18-19 June 2019 as the 16th annual Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Committee Ministers Meeting.
2. Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were represented at senior official level.
3. Ministers noted the active participation and ongoing engagement of partners and other observer organisations and expressed particular gratitude to Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and Mr Feleti Teo, Executive Director of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, for their participation.

Ministerial Chair

4. Ministers invited FSM, represented by the Honourable Marion Henry, Secretary for Resources and Development, to assume the Chair of the FFC for the coming year.
5. Ministers thanked the outgoing Chair, Cook Islands, represented by Hon Tutai Tura, Associate Minister for Marine Resources, for its outstanding leadership of the work of the Committee over the past year.

Annual Report

6. Ministers congratulated Dr Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen on her taking up the position of FFA Director-General in November 2018 and thanked her for the comprehensive annual report of the FFA's work during 2018/19, the first under her term as head of the Agency. Ministers approved the Executive Summary of the FFA annual report for 2018/19 and agreed to forward it to Forum Leaders in accordance with the FFA Convention.

Progress against Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Fisheries

7. Ministers commended the steady progress towards meeting the fisheries management and development targets of the Regional Roadmap while noting the importance of increasing social benefits, including through increased employment in the industry and support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the fisheries sector.
8. Ministers noted that progress against the indicators is largely driven by the purse seine fishery and that the situation at national level differs considerably across the FFA membership, particularly given the poor economic performance of the longline fishery, and called for some commentary on this to be included in future reports on progress against the Roadmap.
9. While noting that target tuna stocks in the western and central Pacific region are all currently at sustainable levels in terms of stock biomass, Ministers emphasised that there is no room for complacency given that all stocks are still declining and gaps remain in management measures, particularly for the high seas.

FFA Strategic Plan

10. Ministers adopted a new Strategic Plan 2020-2025 to guide the FFA's work for the coming five years and thanked the FFA Secretariat, the members of the Reference Group and the consultants that had guided the development of the new Plan over the past year.
11. In adopting the new Plan, Ministers emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Agency continues to be a Member-driven organisation, including strengthening processes to recognise and support national level strategies and priorities in the delivery of advice and services to Members, ensuring that capacity building empowers members and takes into account the role of other partners.

Climate change impacts on offshore fisheries

12. Ministers welcomed the priority that the FFA is placing on work to respond to the threat of climate change, noting that climate change is the single greatest threat to the security of Pacific Island countries, and called for increased investment in science and research in relation to the impacts of climate change on the region's tuna stocks.
13. Ministers strongly supported the key work areas identified by the Secretariat for responding to climate change including: work on adaptive management regimes; the 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 contribute

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to the food security of Pacific Island communities given the predicted declines in coastal fisheries resources.

14. Ministers also called for these issues to be raised internationally at the highest levels, to emphasise the importance for all countries, particularly large emitters, to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement and to gain international recognition of the potential impacts of climate change on Pacific tuna fisheries and the associated economic and social impacts on Pacific Island countries. Ministers supported the continued Pacific advocacy efforts to drive increased global ambition to tackle the threat of climate change.

Regional Longline Strategy

15. Ministers noted with appreciation the progress that has been made over the last year in addressing the poor performance of longline fisheries, including the agreement of a Target Reference Point for South Pacific albacore, and strong progress in implementation of the Longline Vessel Day Scheme.
16. Ministers adopted a Regional Longline Strategy to guide the work of FFA Members in further advancing our shared objectives with respect to longline fisheries, including through establishment of zone based limits for longline fishing within EEZs and action within the WCPFC to constrain longline fishing activity on the high seas.
17. In agreeing the Strategy, Ministers called for the development of an Action Plan with appropriate timeframes and indicators so that progress against the Strategy could be measured and assessed.

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission priorities

18. Ministers congratulated FFA Members and Secretariat for the strong outcomes achieved at WCPFC15 in Honolulu in December 2018, delivering on the key priorities set by Ministers at their meeting in July 2018.
19. In doing so, Ministers highlighted the importance of ensuring that FFA members continue to drive the WCPFC process, including through ensuring that the Commission focuses its energies on issues of critical importance to FFA members to ensure that Pacific fisheries administrations can effectively invest the time and resources needed for progressing work at national and sub-regional level.
20. Ministers agreed the following priorities for FFA members to take forward in 2019:
 - Ensuring that WCPFC measures recognise zone-based management arrangements established by FFA members for fishing within EEZs;

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- Progressing agreement of high seas limits at WCPFC that recognise the interests of FFA members in high seas fisheries;
- Maintaining FFA positions on tropical tuna Target Reference Points;
- Reviewing of the Transshipment Measure to increase transparency of longline fisheries operations on the high seas and tackling IUU fishing;
- Progressing work on the revised Compliance Monitoring Scheme including identification of audit points;
- Advancing towards agreement of WCPFC standards for Electronic Monitoring;
- Operationalising the SIDS Strategic Investment Plan;
- Advancing guidelines for the voluntary provision of economic data to the Commission.

21. Ministers strongly supported the work done to support broader engagement with fishing nations, not only in the WCPFC but also in wider political forums such as meetings with development partners.

Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

22. Ministers welcomed the leadership being taken by RMI through the President's call for an IUU Free Pacific by 2023, supported by the Micronesian Presidents' Summit and lent the FFA's full support to achievement of this target which will be conveyed to Leaders.

23. Ministers noted the ongoing work to explore the use of new technology in the fight against IUU fishing, while also thanking the Government of Australia for its significant commitment to tackling IUU fishing through the Pacific Maritime Security Programme. Ministers particularly welcomed the aerial surveillance programme that has significantly boosted the capacity of FFA Members to surveil their vast EEZs and which is being implemented through national level MOUs with the FFA Secretariat.

24. Ministers welcomed New Zealand's ratification of the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA).

25. Ministers noted with satisfaction the global recognition of FFA's work to combat IUU fishing with FFA's Integrated MCS Framework having been awarded first prize in the Global MCS Network's Stop IUU award in March 2019.

26. Ministers also noted the strong linkage between FFA's work to combat IUU fishing and broader regional security initiatives relating to maritime domain awareness, including the development of the Pacific Fusion Centre as endorsed by the Leaders in 2018 and asked the FFA Secretariat to stay engaged in these initiatives as they progress.

Electronic Monitoring and Technology for Tuna Transparency

27. Ministers welcomed FSM's leadership on the issue of electronic monitoring through the Technology for Tuna Transparency (T3) Challenge, recognising the potential for electronic monitoring to be a game changer for improving management of longline fisheries, and tasked the FFA Secretariat to work with Members to develop an electronic monitoring policy, in collaboration with PNAO and SPC, to be considered at their meeting in 2020.

Human rights and crewing conditions

28. Ministers noted with appreciation the work of Officials in agreeing to new Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions on labour conditions for crew working on foreign fishing vessels that are licensed to fish in FFA Members' waters.

29. In doing so, and in recognition of the critical importance of this issue for the region, Ministers committed to also apply the new Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions to domestic flagged vessels, in a manner appropriate to the domestic legal framework of each member, thereby ensuring a level playing field and full protection of the rights of crew on fishing vessels against human rights abuses at sea.

Fisheries subsidies

30. Ministers noted the UN SDG Target 14.6, and the associated commitment of World Trade Organization Members, to complete negotiations by the end of 2019 on a new WTO agreement to prohibit harmful fisheries subsidies.

31. Ministers expressed their concern that harmful fisheries subsidies can contribute to economic losses in the fisheries sector and create serious distortions in global fish markets and serious impacts on food security and livelihoods, particularly in Small Island Developing States and Territories (SIDS).

32. Ministers recommitted to engage in these negotiations to deliver on SDG Target 14.6 by the end of 2019. Ministers emphasised that any outcome should not unnecessarily constrain the ability of SIDS to develop their tuna fisheries and that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for SIDS should be an integral part of these negotiations.