



CIRCULAR REF: 23/84

21 June 2023

TO: FFA OFFICIAL & FISHERIES CONTACTS

FROM: DR MANUMATAVAI TUPOU-ROOSEN, DIRECTOR-GENERAL

SUBJECT: COOPERATION BETWEEN FFA AND NEW CALEDONIA

Greetings from the FFA Secretariat.

Members will recall that in the margins of WCPFC19 in Da Nang, the representative from New Caledonia met with FFA Members to convey a message from the President of New Caledonia, His Excellency Louis Mapou on their desire to strengthen collaboration with FFA. The FFA subsequently received a letter from His Excellency Mapou to follow up on this, including seeking to define the modalities of our partnership through an arrangement (**Attachment A**). The FFA has just received the attached draft MoU from New Caledonia (**Attachment B**) with the proposal that this be considered at the upcoming FFC meeting.

If agreeable to Members, the Secretariat proposes that this be considered in closed session by Officials at the Special FFC127 in Majuro on Monday 3 July 2023.

A FFC127 paper on this proposal is being developed and will be uploaded to the FFCMIN20 website this week. If time allows following the meeting scheduled for Saturday 1 July in Majuro, Officials may wish to consider this matter.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration with the FFA Secretariat.

Dr Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Attach..

Le Président

N° 2023-SCRRE-

Nouméa, le 20 FFV 2023

Madame la directrice générale,

Lors de la 19^{ème} séance de la commission des pêches de l'océan Pacifique occidental et central (WCPFC) qui s'est tenue au Vietnam en décembre dernier, j'ai demandé à M. Ducrocq, délégué de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, de venir à la rencontre de l'Agence des pêches du Forum des îles du Pacifique (FFA) et de ses membres afin d'engager des échanges sur la possibilité de renforcer nos liens de collaboration.

A cette occasion, j'ai pu noter avec satisfaction que vous avez réservé un accueil chaleureux au délégué de la Nouvelle-Calédonie et que les nombreuses discussions qui ont pu se tenir ont été fructueuses, laissant entrevoir de réelles possibilités de consolider nos relations.

Comme vous le savez, la Nouvelle-Calédonie a décidé depuis son accession au titre de membre à part entière du Forum des îles du Pacifique (FIP) en 2016, d'évaluer la pertinence de solliciter un statut au sein de la FFA conformément à sa politique d'intégration régionale.

En effet, l'évolution de nos relations au sein des organisations régionales et la nouvelle dynamique géopolitique qui se dessine dans notre région nous impose de renforcer nos partenariats régionaux. A cela s'ajoute l'accélération des effets du changement climatique sur nos îles et la raréfaction des ressources naturelles - terrestres et halieutiques - qui impactent nos secteurs d'activités et plus particulièrement la pêche.

Pour faire face à tous ces enjeux, il est donc impérieux, que nous, peuples océaniens, garants de la gestion durable de nos ressources, travaillions à consolider nos relations en faveur de la préservation de notre continent du Pacifique bleu.

En matière de pêche qui est bien le secteur qui nous concerne très directement, la Nouvelle-Calédonie s'engage depuis les années 1980 à promouvoir une pêche durable en assurant la maîtrise de la ressource, en particulier le thon, privilégiant la pêche palangrière. Ainsi, une flotte domestique de palangriers opère exclusivement dans la Zone Économique Exclusive (ZEE) de la Nouvelle-Calédonie selon des principes de pêche durable et en conformité avec les exigences de la WCPFC. A ce jour, plus de 80% de la production thonière est consommée localement, contribuant de ce fait à l'autosuffisance alimentaire des populations locales et au développement durable de son économie.

Concernant les compétences en la matière, la Nouvelle-Calédonie dispose des droits pleins en matière de réglementation et d'exercice des droits d'exploration, d'exploitation, de gestion et de conservation des ressources naturelles, biologiques et non biologiques de sa ZEE. Cette compétence, aujourd'hui pleinement exercée par la Nouvelle-Calédonie lui confère les mêmes droits qu'exerce un Etat côtier au sens de la Convention des Nations Unies sur le Droit de la Mer (UNCLOS) et lui permet de définir sa propre politique des pêches.

Compte tenu de ses responsabilités et de son expertise, la Nouvelle-Calédonie est d'ores et déjà associée, aux travaux du Groupe du Pacifique Sud (SPG) au sein duquel nous partageons nos préoccupations sur la gestion du thon blanc, et apportons notre soutien à la mise en place du projet novateur de gestion concertée de cette ressource, portée par la FFA, que représente le *zone-based management*. Et nous partageons bien d'autres sujets sur lesquels nous pouvons apprendre les uns des autres.

Madame la directrice Générale, sur base de ce constat partagé, je formule par la présente la volonté que mon pays puisse renforcer sa collaboration avec la FFA ; considérant qu'en qualité de membre du FIP, la Nouvelle-Calédonie puisse solliciter, dans un terme à définir, une adhésion pleine et entière au sein de la FFA selon une procédure allégée.

Dans ce sens, je vous propose que nos administrations engagent un dialogue visant à définir les modalités de cette nouvelle association qui pourrait prendre la forme d'une déclaration d'intention laquelle pourrait être présentée au moment de la prochaine réunion des ministres des pêches.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Madame la directrice générale, l'expression de ma haute considération.



Dr Manumatavai Tupou-Rosen
Director General
Forum Fisheries Agency

Madam Director General ,

At the 19th session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) held in Vietnam last December, I asked New Caledonia's representative, Mr. Ducrocq, to meet with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and its members to discuss the possibility of strengthening our collaboration.

I was delighted to hear that you warmly welcomed New Caledonia's representative during the meeting and that the numerous discussions that were held were fruitful, and suggested that real possibilities to consolidate our relations existed.

Since becoming a full member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in 2016, New Caledonia has been assessing the relevance of seeking a similar status within the FFA as a part of its regional integration policy.

Indeed, the evolution of our relations within regional organizations and the new geopolitical dynamics that are taking shape in our region require us to strengthen our regional partnerships. In addition, the growing consequences of climate change on our islands and the increasing scarcity of our natural resources impact various sectors of activity and more particularly fisheries.

In light of all these challenges, it is therefore imperative that we, the peoples of the Pacific, who are the custodians of the sustainable management of our resources, work to consolidate our relations in favor of the preservation of our Blue Pacific Continent.

Regarding fisheries, which is the area that concerns us most directly, New Caledonia has been committed to the promotion of sustainable fishing since the 1980s by ensuring it keeps control over its resource, particularly tuna, by prioritizing longline fishing. Thus, a domestic fleet of longliners operates exclusively in New Caledonia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) according to sustainable fishing principles and in compliance with WCPFC requirements. To date, more than 80% of the tuna production is consumed locally, thus contributing to the food self-sufficiency of local populations and the sustainable development of the country's economy.

New Caledonia has full authority to regulate and exercise the rights of exploration, exploitation, management and conservation of the natural, living and non-living resources within its EEZ. This competence, now fully exercised by New Caledonia, gives it the same rights as a coastal State according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and allows it to set its own fisheries policy.

Given its responsibilities and expertise, New Caledonia is already associated with the work of the South Pacific Group (SPG), within which we share our concerns on the management of albacore tuna, and we support the development of the innovative project for the concerted management of this resource, supported by the FFA, which is zone-based management. And they are many other areas in which we have shared interests and where we can learn from each other.

Madam Director General, on the basis of this shared assessment, I hereby express my country's desire to strengthen its collaboration with the FFA; considering that as a member of the PIF, New Caledonia may request, within a timeframe to be determined, full membership of the FFA according to a simplified procedure.

In this sense, I propose that our services initiate a dialogue aimed at defining the modalities of this new partnership, which could take the form of a declaration of intent that could be examined during the next Forum Fisheries Ministers Meeting.

Please accept, Madam Director General, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Dr. Manumatavai Tupou-Rosen
Director General
Forum Fisheries Agency

Memorandum of understanding

between the secretariat of the forum fisheries agency and New Caledonia

This memorandum of understanding is concluded

Between: Forum Fisheries Agency Secretariat

and New Caledonia

*[Collectively referred to as the "**signatories**".]*

Preamble

Recognizing the need to establish and formalize relations between the FFA and New Caledonia to promote the sustainable use, conservation and management of Pacific migratory resources.

Considering that New Caledonia has exclusive jurisdiction over the regulation and exercise of rights to explore, exploit, manage and conserve the natural biological and non-biological resources of its exclusive economic zone.

Considering that the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) is a regional fisheries organization whose primary objective is to contribute to the sustainable exploitation of tuna resources for the benefit of the peoples of the Pacific.

Considering that the tuna fishing industry makes a substantial contribution to food self-sufficiency and is a source of employment for our Pacific populations.

Considering the FFA's Strategy 2020 - 2025 and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

Considering that New Caledonia is a member of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Considering New Caledonia's observer status within the FFA.

Considering that New Caledonia has been committed to the sustainable management of tuna resources in its EEZ for over 40 years, in line with the objectives of the FFA and the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

Considering that regional management of tuna resources is essential to ensure its sustainability for future generations, and is a priority for New Caledonia.

Considering that the FFA has developed expertise and know-how in helping its members establish a regional tuna resource management strategy.

Considering that the FFA and New Caledonia share expertise and know-how in the sustainable management of tuna resources, regarding in particular:

- food self-sufficiency for Pacific coastal states
- the economics of the tuna industry

- the impact of climate change on fisheries
- white tuna resource management
- by-catch management
- by-catch reduction
- fisheries observer programs
- fisheries monitoring
- working conditions on board ship
- increased fishing pressure in deep-sea areas
- the impact of abandoned drifting fish aggregating devices (FADs) on ecosystems

The following has been agreed upon:

COMMITMENTS

The FFA and New Caledonia commit to:

- draw up a list of common issues and problems in tuna fishing,
- facilitate exchange and consultation ahead of WCPFC meetings to identify shared issues and common positions, and
- facilitate the exchange of information, particularly on fisheries surveillance.

The FFA undertakes to :

- nurture a technical dialogue with New Caledonia on common topics and issues,
- Involve New Caledonia in the FFA's discussions on common topics and issues,
- invite New Caledonia to technical meetings concerning common issues and problems,
- invite New Caledonia to FFA meetings in accordance with its observer status, and provide New Caledonia with preparatory documents in advance of official FFA meetings.

New Caledonia undertakes to :

- increase its involvement in the work of the FFA,
- as far as possible, ensure the presence of a representative of the New Caledonian Fisheries Department at FFA technical meetings,
- ensure New Caledonia's presence at official FFA meetings, and
- inform the FFA about its fisheries policy and its evolution.

The signatories acknowledge that this memorandum is not legally binding, but this does not diminish the intention of the signatories to comply with the terms, conditions, responsibilities and commitments stipulated in this memorandum.

Disputes relating to the interpretation or implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding will be resolved amicably through consultation and negotiation between the signatories.

The present memorandum will come into force on the date of its signature and will remain in force until one of the signatories informs the other signatory of its decision to terminate it six (6) months in advance.

The signatories agree to act in good faith in their mutual relations and to comply with the terms and conditions, responsibilities and commitments stipulated in this memorandum.

The signatories further agree to consult each other on all matters covered by this memorandum in order to ensure its effective and efficient implementation under their respective responsibilities and commitments.

This memorandum applies for an indefinite period.

Approved and signed today in on the day of.....2023.

For the Forum Fisheries Agency Secretariat Dr. Manu TUPOU-ROOSEN Director General	For New Caledonia Mr Louis MAPOU President of the Government
In attendance Mr Adolphe DIGOUÉ Minister for fisheries	