


FFA
**FORUM FISHERIES COMMITTEE
ONE HUNDREDTH AND EIGHTEENTH MEETING**
11-14 May 2021

Agenda Item:	4
Paper No:	FFC118-WP.01
Title:	Reporting against Ministers' directives

Summary:

In an extraordinary 2020, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' had a special meeting virtually, that considered two key issues – the Impact of COVID-19 on the Pacific as well as the appointment of the next Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General. As such there were no specific decisions in relation to the work of oceanic fisheries.

Forum Fisheries Ministers held their 17th Meeting virtually setting the high-level direction of FFA's work at their annual meetings. To ensure and track that these directives are actively progressing, the Secretariat has prepared this paper which sets out a summary of the key directives from FFCMIN and the status of work. Each of these directives are elaborated on further in the related FFC papers.

Recommendations:

The Committee is invited to:

- i. **Consider** the overview of the status of work against the 2020 FFC Ministerial directives, noting that these will be discussed in detail over the course of the meeting.

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2020 MINISTERIAL DECISIONS

FFCMIN17 Directive	Secretariat Progress as at 30 March 2021
<i>FFA Strategic Plan</i> 9. Ministers welcomed the steps being taken by the Secretariat to implement the new FFA Strategic Plan 2020-25. In doing so, Ministers encouraged the Secretariat to take this opportunity to enhance the role and capability of the Secretariat to deliver outcomes for Members, including through innovation, diversifying opportunities in the tuna fishery and recognising the importance of partnerships with other organisations.	The Secretariat continues to implement the 2020-2025 FFA Strategic Plan with an initial emphasis on enhancing the role and capability of the Secretariat. Planning documents continue to be improved upon along with the monitoring, evaluation, reporting, learning, and adaptation (MERLA). <i>Agenda Items 6 and 7</i> <i>FFC118.WP03 “Implementation of the FFA Strategic Plan 2020-2025”</i> <i>FFC118.WP04 “FFA 5 Year Business Plan”</i>
<i>Impact of COVID-19 on the Tuna Fishery</i> 16. Ministers welcomed <u>the study</u> being undertaken by the Secretariat to look at ways to maintain observer livelihoods and ensure their safety, including through the use of their analytical fisheries knowledge and skills on-shore, and looked forward to the outcomes of this work. 17. Ministers noted that the pandemic has resulted in an increased risk of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing due to limitations on the use of human observers and port inspections. Ministers highlighted the increased <u>importance of the wider suite of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance tools</u> to monitor fishing activities in their waters such as the FFA vessel monitoring system, vessel of interest information and the regional surveillance picture, and the role that new technology can play to further enhance the application of these	The Secretariat continues to work with Members in an effort to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts include enhancing MCS tools; ensuring observer safety and livelihoods are paramount; and implementing Members priorities. <i>Agenda Item 5 FFC118.WP02 “Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic”</i> <i>Agenda Item 10 FFC118.WP07 “Regional Longline Action Plan”</i> <i>Agenda Item 12 FFC118.WP09 “Enhancing Tools and Partnerships to combat IUU”</i>

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tools. 18. Recognising the impact of COVID-19 on the use of human observers, Ministers welcomed the adoption of the <u>Regional Longline Electronic Monitoring Policy</u> as an important step towards improved transparency of longline fishing operations, and <u>urged that the costed workplan for the implementation of the Policy be completed by the end of 2020.</u> 20. Ministers made specific reference to the support provided by the FFA Secretariat to Members through the use of the FFA vessel monitoring system to <u>contact trace the movements of fishing vessels.</u> This has been invaluable for ensuring border security and mitigating the risk of COVID-19 entering countries by sea. 21. Ministers also <u>called for ongoing economic assessments on the impacts of COVID-19 on the fisheries sector, noting that national level assessments will be an essential input to decision making.</u> Noting the airfreight challenges with exporting fish outside the region, Ministers welcomed the work being undertaken to explore <u>market opportunities within the region.</u> 22. Ministers recognised the increased importance of tuna fisheries for food security and welcomed the work to <u>investigate potential ways to increase the contribution of tuna to food security</u> as well the impact of COVID-19 on women in Pacific offshore fisheries.	<i>Agenda item 15 FFC118.WP12 “Observer Safety and Livelihoods”</i> <i>Agenda item 18 FFC118.WP15 “Crew Safety and Welfare”</i> <i>Agenda item 21 FFC118.WP20 “Harnessing Comparative Advantage”</i> <i>FFC118.INFO.10 “Maintaining and enhancing market access”</i> <i>FFC118.INFO11 “Investment, employment and other opportunities”</i> <i>FFC118.INFO12 “Examining the contribution of tuna fisheries to regional food security”</i> <i>FFC118.INFO15 “Economic Analysis and capacity building”</i>
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Fisheries Roadmap: Offshore Fisheries Report Card

23. Ministers noted the ongoing disparity between the purse seine fishery, which is performing strongly and providing increased returns to PNA Members + Tokelau in particular, and the longline fishery which is not performing well and economic rents are being dissipated.
24. In this regard Ministers welcomed the development of the Action Plan for implementation of the Regional Longline Strategy and encouraged the Secretariat to prioritise the work set out in the Action Plan.
25. Ministers highlighted their commitment to establishment of zone-based catch and/or effort limits within EEZs and the need for Members to work together to take forward the zone-based management approach within WCPFC, including to establish binding limits on the high seas.
26. Noting the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on international trade, Ministers called on FFA to undertake a regional study over the coming year on how FFA Members could harness their comparative advantage with respect to regional tuna resources and maximise the benefits that flow within the region. This could include greater processing capacity and value-adding, cross-border investment, increased regional trade, improved transportation, and improved labour mobility.
27. In doing so, Ministers emphasised the importance of ensuring the region's tuna stocks continue to be sustainably managed, noting that there is no room for complacency given that management frameworks require strengthening and there is increased fishing pressure on stocks.

The Secretariat continues to gather data for updating the Report Card and in the 2020 Report Card provided additional indicators reflecting the economic contribution of the fishery at national level.

A draft of the 2021 Report Card (which will contain 2020 updates for some indicators, where available) will be available at the FFC Ministerial meeting. The final version will be made available in late August/early September.

In addition, the Secretariat has moved to place greater emphasis on work in the area of social benefits. Current or proposed work includes:

- (i) Understanding the current contribution of tuna fisheries to food security in the region and investigating potential initiatives that may increase this.
- (ii) Gender and social inclusion.
- (iii) Establishing an indicator framework to better capture and incorporate socio-economic development benefits flowing from Pacific tuna fisheries.

Work is being progressed on the critical issue of establishing zone based limits for longline fisheries within FFA members EEZs, both in the tropical longline fishery targeting bigeye and yellowfin and in the southern longline fishery targeting South Pacific albacore.

Reaching agreement among FFA members on the limits to apply within FFA EEZs is essential for securing strong outcomes in the WCPFC that recognise (and thereby strengthen) the zone based rights of FFA members. Ministers will be briefed on progress and may be asked to provide guidance and direction in relation to addressing key sticking points.

Agenda item 9 FFC118.WP06 "Priorities for WCPFC"

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	<i>Agenda item 10 FFC118.WP07 “Regional Longline Strategy Action Plan”</i> <i>Agenda item 11 FFC118.WP08 “Management of South Pacific Albacore”</i> <i>Agenda item 17 FFC118.WP14 “Development of socio-economic indicators framework”</i> <i>Agenda item 21 FFC118.WP22 “Harnessing Comparative Advantage”</i> <i>FFC118.INFO.10 “Maintaining and enhancing market access”</i> <i>FFC118.INFO11 “Investment, employment and other opportunities”</i>
<i>Safety of observers and crew</i> 29. While recognising achievements to date, Ministers called for greater attention to be given to the issue of observer safety given the ongoing risks faced by observers in their work that continues to result in the injury and, even now, the unacceptable death of Pacific observers in the line of duty. Such efforts should include the strengthening of measures in the WCPFC and renewed investigation of regional options for ensuring observers are fully insured and that their families are supported in the event of tragedy at sea. 30. Similarly, Ministers called for increased focus on the issue of labour standards for crew on fishing vessels in the face of ongoing evidence of human rights abuses at sea. Ministers called for the full implementation of the minimum conditions on crew employment that were adopted at their meeting in 2019, and welcomed support from the Government of New Zealand for a comprehensive multi-year project aimed at improving labour conditions at sea in the region	The Secretariat’s efforts in working with members on safety of observers and crew has been a key priority throughout the fiscal year. During the Pre-FFC week, a meeting has been scheduled with members on crew safety. The Secretariat conducted a regional observer insurance workshop to review the minimum insurance standards on 19 March 2021, and the outcome of this workshop will be presented separately. The Secretariat continues to implement the recommendations from the observer livelihood and safety report towards sustaining observer livelihoods as well as protecting and safeguarding the PIRFO observers. The Secretariat is liaising with NOPs to assist with the procurement of basic PPEs for observers as well as, standing ready to provide any other technical assistance with the observer placement COVID19 risk mitigation protocol by working closely with SPC’s public health division.

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	FFA and key partners are progressing the implementation of all recommendations, and hoping to achieve this by end of 2021, with the main aim for redeploying observers back to sea and they are protected. <i>Agenda item 13 FFC118.WP10 “Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions for Access by Fishing Vessels”</i> <i>Agenda item 15 FFC118.WP12 “Observer Safety and Livelihoods”</i> <i>Agenda item 18 FFC118.WP15 “Crew Safety and Welfare”</i>
<i>Fisheries subsidies</i> 31. Ministers noted the importance of the current WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations to eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies. Ministers noted their 2019 statement on this matter, including that any outcome should not unnecessarily constrain the ability of SIDS to develop their tuna fisheries, and <u>encouraged officials to work towards a successful conclusion to WTO negotiations by December 2020.</u>	Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO (MC12) was suspended. The main anticipated outcome of MC12 was a Fisheries Subsidies Agreement (FSA). WTO Members then aimed for a FSA outcome at a special session of the WTO General Council at the end of 2020 in light of the deadline for SDG 14.6. However, no agreement was reached by that deadline and negotiations have continued into 2021. MC12 is now scheduled for the week of 29 November 2021. Members are trying to conclude the Agreement by July to allow WTO Trade Ministers time to review the Agreement before endorsing it at MC12. <i>FFC118.INFO14 “WTO Rules for Fisheries Subsidies – update on the status of the current round of negotiations”</i>
<i>Climate change impacts on offshore fisheries</i> 31. Notwithstanding the immediate focus on COVID-19 impacts, Ministers welcomed the ongoing priority that the FFA is placing on work to respond to the impacts of climate change which remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific. Ministers emphasised the importance of not losing sight of this issue in the current environment.	Work is continuing on adaptive management regimes, maritime boundaries and food security. The Secretariat has been working with partners, PNAO, SPREP, SPC and PIFS, to progress this work.

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32. In this respect, Ministers called for closer CROP collaboration that responds to the specific needs of the region and that firmly places fisheries issues onto the wider climate change agenda, including in the context of the Pacific's engagement in the UNFCCC.
33. Ministers strongly supported the key regional work areas identified by the Secretariat for responding to climate change including the securing of baselines and associated maritime boundaries in the face of sea-level rise and the transition to adaptive management regimes that ensure tuna stocks continue to contribute to the economies and food security of Pacific Island communities, given the predicted eastwards movement of tuna stocks under climate change.

RFMM1 Decisions

Climate Change & Fisheries

17. Ministers welcomed the regional update on climate change and fisheries presented by SPREP and commended the collaboration of CROP agencies.
18. Ministers emphasised that maritime boundaries were critical in establishing enduring sovereign management and use rights to ocean resources and encouraged all members to delimit and deposit all outstanding boundaries to secure and protect our Blue Pacific, and tasked PIFS, FFA and SPC to continue this support to Members.
19. Ministers called on FFA, PNAO, and SPC to work with Members and other relevant CROP organisations to develop an advocacy strategy relevant to the fisheries sector to enhance high level messaging at the UNFCCC and related meetings to advance measures to address the impacts of climate change on fisheries in the region.
20. Ministers tasked FFA, SPREP, SPC, PIFS, and PNAO to explore opportunities for partnerships and collaboration between fisheries and climate change

The Secretariat is examining potential approaches to assess impacts of climate change on catch and the economics of the fishery, including at national level.

The Secretariat actively engages in the One CROP Plus Mechanism to advocate and provide the required information to firmly place fisheries issues into the wider regional and global climate change agenda. The Director General co-chairs the CROP Oceans Taskforce with the Pacific Oceans Commissioner.

Agenda item 8: FFC118.WP.05 "Impact of Climate Change on Offshore Fisheries"

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focal points and to provide a platform for stakeholders to inform on progress with respect to planning and implementation of climate change adaptation in the region. 21. Ministers welcomed the development of the Climate Change Capacity Building Programme for the fisheries sector through the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) and available resources to facilitate mainstreaming in the fisheries sector of climate change and specific impacts such as ocean acidification. 22. Ministers encouraged engagement by the fisheries sector in the relevant processes at the national level such as the development of National Adaptation Plans, Green Climate Fund Country Programmes and their implementation. 23. Ministers supported in-country coordination and regional collaboration to develop shared strategies to exchange knowledge, research, training, technological advances, and good managerial practices in strengthening climate resilience and reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs) from the fisheries sectors at national and regional levels.	
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