SPC ACTIVITIES

with a chain counterweight connected to the rope with shackles and swivels, at a depth of around 150 m. The reason why this FAD was lost is not known, although it was reported to be in an area of strong current.

Community surveys

The first community surveys were completed in Niue in November 2001, and the Cook Islands (Rarotonga and Aitutaki) in March 2002.

SPC’s Fisheries Development Adviser, Lindsay Chapman travelled to Niue in February to conduct a second community survey. The survey was conducted with the same people, using the same questionnaire used in November 2001. The aim of the community surveys is to try to measure or identify any change in fishing practices over time, especially in regard to fishing around FADs. Of the 155 households surveyed in 2001, 127 were re-interviewed and eight new families were interviewed. Nine families that had been interviewed in 2001 had departed Niue permanently, three families had moved to other villages on Niue, and another 16 families were on holidays. The data collected from this survey will be analysed in the coming months.

The Cook Islands will have its second survey completed in May 2003. An analysis of the data will then be undertaken. A third set of surveys are scheduled to be conducted in all locations in the first half of 2004.

The third main component of the FAD research project is collecting catch and effort data from local fishermen in each location. Unfortunately, this still remains a major problem area, as fishermen are reluctant to complete logbooks developed for this project. At the end of March 2003, only 1000 catch records (log sheets) had been received for the three project locations. This is an area that the project will continue to focus on to try to improve the level of coverage.

A full summary of the work completed up to the end of May 2003 will be compiled and presented to the New Zealand Pacific Initiative for the Environment fund in a progress report. The main findings will also be presented in the next issue of the SPC Fisheries Newsletter.

Tuna longline manual

It is expected that the English version of the tuna longline manual will be available in both hard copy and on the SPC website by the end of June 2003.

COASTAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT SECTION

(Previously the Community Fisheries Section)

SPC Regional Policy Meeting on Coastal Fisheries Management

Nadi, Fiji Islands, 17–21 March 2003

This regional meeting was organised by SPC and funded by the Commonwealth Secretariat, FAO and WPRMFC. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a forum for country representatives to address common problems in coastal fisheries, and to suggest ways the SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme and other agencies could assist countries in developing and
implementing management initiatives. The meeting brought together 17 Pacific Island heads of fisheries departments, experts, consultants and interested groups and individuals.

The week-long meeting included discussions and deliberations on issues and topics related to coastal fisheries management in Pacific Island countries. Dr Mike King was contracted to assist with the meeting and with follow-up activities.

The Permanent Secretary for the Public Commission in Fiji Islands, Ratu Tui Cavuilati, gave the opening address. Ratu Tui emphasised the importance of the inshore fishery and the many changes and factors affecting marine resource availability and abundance within the coastal zone. He stressed the importance of research and the management of inshore fisheries, noting the importance of greater support for national attempts at coastal fisheries management. He stated that management was important for maintaining sustainability for current and future use of coastal resources.

Issues discussed

The main topic areas included:

**The need for a regional strategy on coastal fishery management**

Dr Tim Adams, SPC’s Director of the Marine Resources Division, presented a paper that examined the issues involved and the need for a regional strategy. Discussions by participants indicated support for this concept. The need for the development of a regional “toolbox of methods” to be used by countries was highlighted.

**Process of identification of problems**

The meeting significantly focussed on bringing out concerns, issues and common factors that affect resource use and management in Pacific Island countries. Dr Mike King led discussions with a paper presenting a summary of problems identified through a questionnaire.

Before the meeting, a questionnaire had been distributed to countries. Countries were requested to identify the main problems affecting their fisheries and to propose possible ways of addressing these issues. This exercise highlighted the many similarities in problems faced by countries.

During the meeting these problems were discussed at length, with participants discussing factors and issues affecting resource use and management (see table below).

In addition to the above, respondents noted problems associated with the pollution or degradation of wetlands and coastal zones. Of these, siltation, eutrophication and uncontrolled or excessive coastal development were prominent.

**The capability of national fisheries agencies to manage coastal fisheries**

This session generally focussed on the need to include resource owners and users in management initiatives. Mr Semisi Fakahau of the Commonwealth Secretariat emphasized the human resources development (HRD) approach to ensure the effective participation of the owners and users of coastal fishery resources in management. In most instances, countries lack the facilities and financial capacity to implement management programmes on their own. Thus it is important to involve communities and stakeholders. Within this, the need for capacity building was identified.

Discussions from this session highlighted the need for long-term projects to ensure capacity building. Customary and cultural issues were also identified as crucial to the planning process of management and development initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main problems identified are listed below in order of importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overexploitation of marine species                           78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate or outdated fisheries regulations                 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate enforcement of fisheries regulations              50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of capacity in the country (e.g. in stock assessment, data collection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destructive fishing methods (e.g. explosives, breaking coral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overly efficient fishing methods (e.g. night diving, small mesh nets, scuba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap between national/provincial/island responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift from subsistence to commercial fishing                 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciguatera fish poisoning                                     11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal fishing by foreign vessels                           6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SPC ACTIVITIES

The collection and use of fisheries statistics

Presentations on this topic were given by: Masanami Izumi, FAO Fishery Officer; Ms Josie Perez, National Statistics Office from the Philippines; David Hamm, National Marine Fisheries Service, Honolulu; Etuati Ropeti of Samoa Fisheries Department; and Dr Tim Adams of SPC.

The session focussed on the importance of statistics in fisheries management and ways of collecting and analysing data. A major challenge is how data already collected (in censuses) can be used for practical management purposes. The importance of involving communities in data collection was also noted as being very important.

In the discussions that followed, many countries emphasised the need for data collection and survey training, and the need for a methodology for both small and large islands.

Dr Tim Adams also discussed how regional organisations could assist with the development of national databases.

National regulations applied to coastal fisheries

Transform Aqorau, Legal Counsel at the Forum Fisheries Agency, spoke on national regulations applied to coastal fisheries. He advised that coastal fisheries legislation is a complex issue in its own right, which justified the development of legal services within SPC. The possibility of SPC conducting awareness workshops and producing learning materials on regulations was discussed at length.

Dr Mike King spoke about the problems of enforcement, and raised a few questions on the difficulties of enforcement at the national level. The need to simplify regulations for better understanding, the need for regional size limits, and public awareness on application and uses of national regulations were other major concerns that were discussed. There were discussions about the possibility of harmonising legislation and regulations, although the complexities within countries and communities would make this difficult. Another suggested alternative was to decentralise, rather than centralise regulations, and make use of existing traditional institutions.

It was also suggested that maximum size limits as well as minimum size limits should be considered. The need for enforcement and awareness work on legislation was supported by many countries. This was especially in reviewing outdated legislations and also the simplification of currently used legislations.

The week-long meeting included discussions and deliberations on issues and topics related to coastal fisheries management in Pacific Island countries.
The involvement of fishing communities in coastal fisheries management

The meeting emphasised the importance of encouraging and supporting fishing communities to manage their own fisheries resources. This is the basic principle under which the Coastal Fisheries Management Section is operating. The communities and people who own and have access to resources are tasked with the responsibility of managing their own resources. The communities are encouraged to define their own problems with fish stocks and the marine environment, and propose solutions to these problems. The communities are then assisted in setting their own conservation rules, and have the responsibility of enforcing them.

Several country representatives shared their experiences in involving communities in coastal fisheries management.

These included examples of SPC-assisted projects in the Marshall Islands, Samoa and American Samoa. The International Waters Programme, based at SPREP, provided examples from Solomon Islands, Niue and Vanuatu. Cook Islands presented an example of community-based projects initiated by community elders and chiefs with implementation and enforcement relying on the traditional system. The Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA) network was cited as an example of management with a collaborative approach by NGOs, government bodies and individuals.

Most projects reported on their successes and highlighted the challenges. Some challenges identified included project time frames and how to fit these into community times, problems of transportation, and other locally based problems that slow down project implementation. The project in some form utilized traditional institutions and regulations to implement and monitor progress of their work.

Discussions following the case studies highlighted a change in how culture is seen as a "hinderance", and how that can be used in fisheries management. There was also concern that publication of work already done on coastal fisheries management in the region should be pursued.

The need for a more appropriate approach to the situation of smaller island nations was raised. This was especially important given the size and overlap in government work and work areas. Samoa also discussed how the management programme is now becoming a political tool.

Gender issues in the management of coastal fisheries

Aliti Vunisea, SPC's Community Fisheries Officer, spoke on gender issues in coastal fisheries management in the Pacific. She stated that this was an issue that had to be considered at all levels of coastal fisheries management. She argued that women are better managers, and the possibility of women taking over management initiatives in the future should be considered. There was general agreement that gender considerations were very important in any management attempt.

Customary marine tenure (CMT) and the empowerment of communities

Mr Ueta Fa’asili of SPC introduced the session on customary marine tenure and the empowerment of communities. Examples of customary marine tenure were given by Etuati Ropeti (Samoa), Alifereti Bogiva (Fiji Islands) and Tevita Latu (Tonga). The examples presented similarities and differences of the implications of tenureship on resource use, access and management and how CMT could have an impact on planned coastal management projects.

Mr Blaise Kuemlangan spoke on the importance of empowering coastal fishing communities. Discussions suggested that proper legislation could assist in enforcement. Because of issues facing fisheries agencies, there is the question of whether existing legislation is sufficient for addressing new problems.

SPC work related to the management of coastal fisheries

Several presentations were given on SPC’s work relating to the management of coastal fisheries. Pierre Labrosse, and Dr Mecki Kronen discussed the work of the PROCFISH project. Steve Beverly (Fisheries Development Section) Ben Ponia (Aquaculture) and Being Yeeting (Life Reef Fish) made presentations as well. There was considerable interest in this session as countries were eager to know the current work of the different sections and how these could contribute to management initiatives.

Organisations, donors and NGOs involved in fisheries management

This session included presentations and discussions by Mr Masanami Izumi of FAO-Pacific, Mr Walter Ikehara of the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WPRFMC), Michelle Lam of the Marine Aquarium Council, Dr Warwick Nash of the WorldFish Center.
Representatives of other major organisations included Ms Sophia Bettencourt of the World Bank, Ms Paula Holland of the International Waters Programme based at SPREP, and Ms Mary Powers of SPREP.

Dr Kenneth McKay of CSPOD and Ed Peek discussed the main development issues to consider when applying for funding. This was to assist countries in familiarising themselves with what to focus on and areas to look at when seeking funding.

**Problem-solution tree analysis**

A presentation on the use of problem-solution trees in solving problems related to coastal fisheries management was given by Mike King. Groups of participants then practiced using this tool.

Final discussions were wide ranging, resulting in several recommendations. American Samoa believed that community representatives should be given an opportunity to participate at the Heads of Fisheries meeting. The response from SPC was that countries could consider the possibility of including community representation in their delegation.

There was also a recommendation that any future work done by the Coastal Fisheries Management Section should include capacity building. This should involve attachments to SPC and to other countries with management initiatives in place.

In summary, the recommendations were that SPC:

- examine ways to assist countries in collecting inshore fisheries data and developing a statistical data storage system with special emphasis on national fisheries agencies with small numbers of personnel.
- identify resources to conduct training on statistics and data collection, provide advice on the use of these data for fisheries management.
- conduct socioeconomic surveys in countries that have MPAs, to determine if there are differences between areas with MPAs and areas without MPAs.
- establish a legal service to respond to requests from island countries for assistance in legislation related to coastal fisheries.
- document and recommend regional size limits for important species to help countries in the preparation of regulations.
- develop non-technical publicity material to be used in assisting countries in raising public awareness on the need for fisheries management and fisheries regulations.
- assist in the development of national community programmes for the management of coastal fisheries resources.

Other discussions by participants centred on the prioritization of SPC activities and resulted in the following recommendations, that:

The SPC Coastal Fisheries Management Section should not be prioritised as countries have different levels of activities that may not accurately be reflected if prioritised.

The SPC Coastal Fisheries Management Section coordinate its activities with the aquaculture, FAD and artificial reef programmes, to promote these as alternatives to existing coastal fisheries.

SPC establish a framework for the implementation of the enforcement of coastal fisheries regulations.

**Further work by the SPC Coastal Fisheries Management Section**

There is an agreement that there should be a mission to different countries to further work on problems and issues identified. Ueta Fa’asili, SPC’s Coastal Fisheries Adviser, Dr Mike King (project consultant), and Semisi Fakahau of the Commonwealth Secretariat started on the mission to countries to assess needs for national coastal fisheries management and will be visiting 14 different countries in six weeks.