

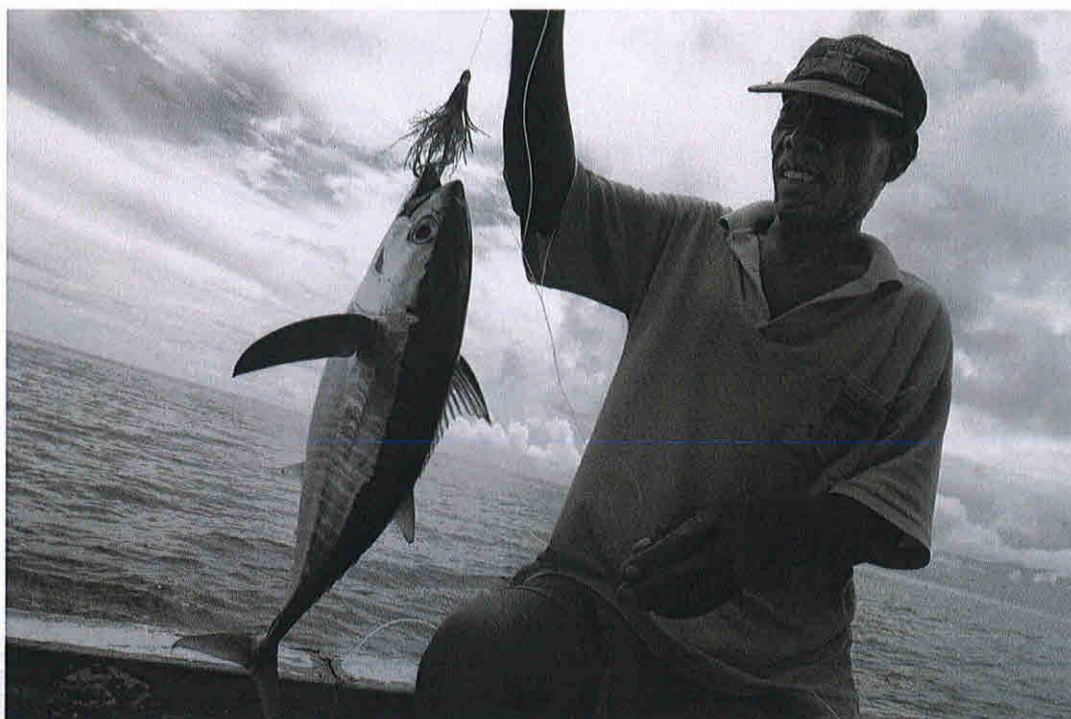
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A local Kiribati fisherman catching tuna. Picture taken during Greenpeace Rainbow Warrior Pacific tour in 2004. (picture property of Greenpeace)

Tuna in the Pacific: The Involvement of Europe

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Abbreviations

ACP	African-Caribbean-Pacific, group of states with a special developmental relationship with the European Union
DWFN	Distant Water Fishing Nation
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IUU	Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
MT	Metric Tonne
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
USA	United States of America
WCP(O)	Western and Central Pacific (Ocean)
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Introduction

The main characteristic for which the Pacific has been known for over centuries is its vast stretch of ocean which comprises 180 millions of square kilometres (one third of the surface of the earth) when looking at the entire Pacific basin, or a still impressive 7,7 million km² when only looking at the South Pacific and excluding Australia. It is however not the vastness of this water mass that currently attracts the interest of foreign countries, but it is the richness in marine resources. These marine resources, of which tuna is the most important, are highly valued on the world market, and over-fishing in other areas of the world only makes the Pacific more interesting for foreign countries to divert their activities to. Several foreign countries already fish in the Pacific for many years, and are referred to as Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFN, since they fish in waters in great distance to their home base). The European Union, pressed by their own exhausted resources in the Atlantic Ocean as a result of its over-fishing, as well as their large fishing capacity for which they need employment, only recently entered the region to start fishing for tuna and has therefore become the most distant fishing nation. For the member states of the EU it will not be possible to find fishing grounds at a greater distance than the South Pacific and it is a remarkable thought that European fishermen have to sail to the other side of the world to be able to find an economically viable fishing ground.

A few explanations on fisheries regulations in the Pacific

When looking at fisheries regulations and agreements in the Pacific, it is important to make a difference between fishing in high seas and fishing in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of Pacific nations. Below, these two aspects are discussed in more detail.

Fishing in the EEZ of Pacific nations

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) gave coastal nations rights to resource use over the sea area within 200 nautical miles of their coastline, an area known as the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Most of the Pacific Island countries and territories with islands scattered over a huge sea area thus have considerable amounts of ocean in their control - some 201 million square kilometres - several times the land area of Europe. When a foreign nation want to fish within the EEZ of a country, that foreign nation has to negotiate under what conditions (and for which price) this fishing can take place. This is generally done under bilateral fishery agreements. Since fishing in one EEZ can affect fishing in the EEZ of another country (especially when fishing for migrating fish stocks like tuna), there are also regulations agreed among the Pacific Island states, which are member of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), to manage fishing in the EEZ and prevent overfishing. The only multilateral fishery agreement which is currently in place is between FFA Pacific member countries and the United States.

The South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)

The FFA was established in 1979 by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to help manage marine resources, in particular the highly migratory tuna species. Today there are seventeen member countries.

The establishment of the FFA was in response to developments in the 1970s in relation to the United Nations 'Law of the Sea' Convention. This recognized the sovereignty of coastal states over economic resources within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Amid mounting pressure on global fish stocks and clear evidence of overfishing in many fisheries, the FFA was created in order to: (i) ensure the sustainability of the South Pacific region's fisheries; and (ii) allow Pacific Island countries to capture a larger share of the fisheries' economic benefits.

Vision Statement: We, the Member Countries of the Forum Fisheries Agency, will enjoy the highest level of economic and social benefits that is compatible with sustainable use of our tuna resources.

Fishing in the high seas of the Pacific

Only about 20 percent of the region is covered by high seas (seas which do not fall under the jurisdiction of a country like in the EEZ) and no fleets in the region target high seas resources as a primary fishery. An important proportion of the region's high seas areas are surrounded by zones of national jurisdiction forming enclaves by two or more states. South Pacific states are vitally concerned about the extent and level of fishing operations on the region's high seas as it is integrally related to, and directly impacts on, fishing operations in their respective EEZs. It is for this reason, that these states give high priority to the co-ordination of tuna fishing activities and management policy in the South Pacific and seek to actively co-operate with DWFNs concerning their activities in the South Pacific. The establishment after long and tiresome negotiations of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention in which both Pacific nations as well as Distant Water Fishing Nations are represented is supposed to control fishing activities in these uncontrolled high seas areas as well as within the EEZ. In December 2004 the *Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention* was officially launched, which for the first time established a *Tuna Commission* to regulate tuna fishing on the high seas. Countries that have joined the convention include the Pacific Island states, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, the United States and the European Union. The *Tuna commission* will be based in Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). It is expected that this commission will play an important role in the regulation of tuna fisheries in the Pacific, and its establishment is considered to be a milestone in fisheries management in the Pacific. It remains to be seen however how things will work out in the end and to see how committed the parties are to opt for a joint approach rather than looking for their own short term profit.

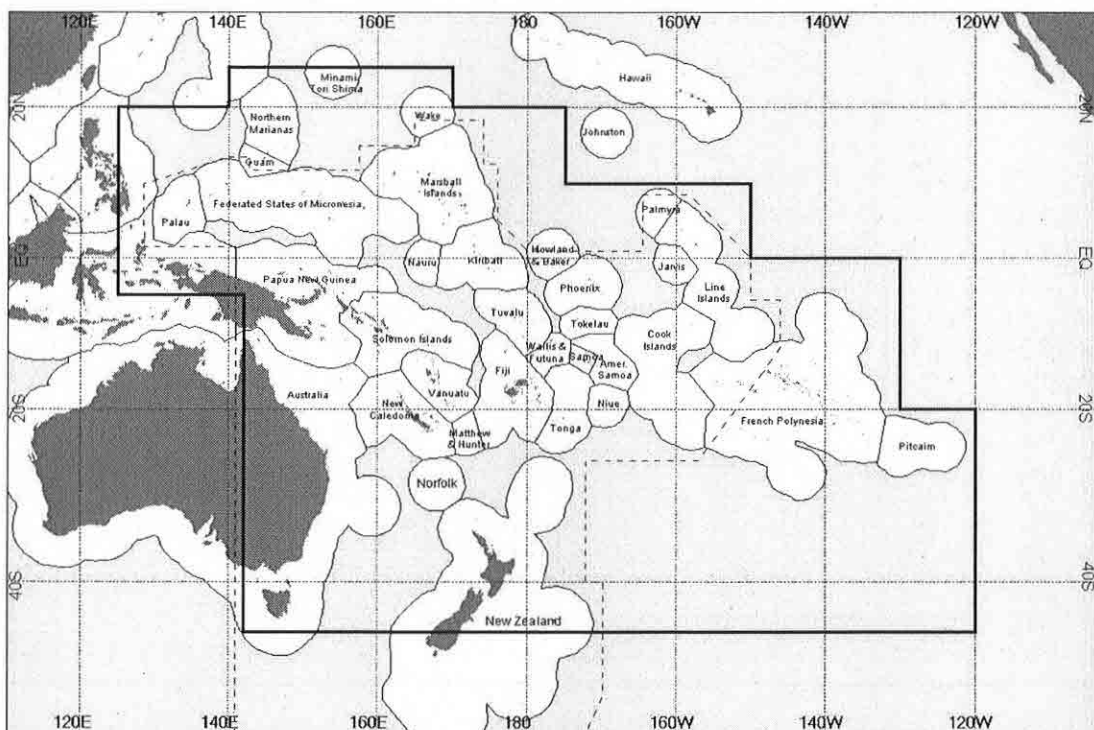


Figure 1: Western and Central Pacific, showing Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) as unshaded areas.

Country	Land area (km ²)	Population	Area of EEZ (km ²)	Total GDP	GDP per capita	Year
American Samoa	200	61 100	390 000	135 000	6 660	1985
Cook Islands	237	19 000	1 830 000	133 879	7 069	1995
Federated States of Micronesia	701	111 800	2 780 000	270 133	2 513	1995
Fiji	18 272	779 200	1 290 000	2618 942	3 163	1995
Guam	541	145 400	218 000	3999 067	26 795	1995
Republic of Kiribati	811	83 400	3550 000	55 976	731	1994
Republic of Marshall Islands	181	60 000	2131 000	140 319	2 402	1995
Republic of Nauru	21	11 200	320 000	206 250	35 144	1989
Niue	259	2 100	390 000	8 835	3 946	1991
Northern Mariana Islands	471	65 100	777 000	732 432	13 231	1994
New Caledonia	19 103	201 300	1740 000	4325 268	22 551	1995
Republic of Palau	488	18 100	629 000	121 269	7 613	1992
Papua New Guinea	462 243	4311 500	3120 000	7336 111	1 859	1994
Pitcairn Island	5	47	800 000	-	-	-
French Polynesia	3 521	222 300	5030 000	5155 020	23 930	1995
Samoa	2 935	177 700	120 000	211 778	1 288	1995
Solomon Islands	27 556	401 100	1340 000	476 282	1 196	1995
Tokelau	10	1 500	290 000			
Kingdom of Tonga	747	97 800	700 000	212 848	2 128	1995
Tuvalu	26	10900	900 000	15 473	1 674	1995
Republic of Vanuatu	12 190	200	680 000	322 824	1 943	1995
Wallis and Futuna	255	14 200	300 000	-	-	-

Table 1: Some statistical data of Pacific Islands

The Fishery

The tuna fishery of the Western and Central Pacific is primarily made up of industrial purse-seine, pole-and-line and longline operations. These occur both in the *Exclusive Economic Zones* (EEZ) of Pacific states and on the high seas. The main species targeted by these fisheries are skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna and albacore tuna.

The tuna fishery of the *Western and Central Pacific Ocean* (WCP) may be divided by type of fishing operation. The surface fishery uses purse-seine and pole-and-line gear to target skipjack tuna, and takes incidental catches of yellowfin and bigeye tuna. The sub-surface fisheries use longlines to target large, deeper swimming yellowfin, bigeye and albacore tuna. There is considerable interaction between the two fisheries, since the surface fisheries take significant catches of immature yellowfin and bigeye tuna, a proportion of which would have recruited to the longline fishery. The issue of interaction has relevance for a range of management strategies, including optimum utilisation and allocation.

The purse-seine fishery has been dominant in terms of volume of tuna landings in the WCP. The catch averages around 60% of the total WCP catch and is destined primarily for canning, with prices typically below US\$1000/t. The lower volume sashimi longline fishery, while accounting for less than 20% of total landings, is worth around 45% of the total value of the catch. More than 90% of the tuna caught in the WCP is taken by vessels owned or flagged by distant-water fishing nations (DWFNs) and landed outside the region.

Purse-seines and pole-and-line gear are intensive fishing methods, catching surface swimming, schooling tuna. Longline gear is more extensive (a single longline can be in excess of 100 km in length) and targets larger, more solitary tuna at depths of up to 150 m.

How does a purse-seiner work?

Once the school of fish is found, a powerful smaller boat with one end of a massive net is launched off the seiner (the big fishing vessel). The seiner then circles the school with the net returning to the small boat. The net is drawn tight or 'pursed' at the base and hauled alongside. This method nets marine life indiscriminately.

What is a longliner?

A longliner lays fishing lines of up to 100km in length with up to 3000 baited hooks which hang at different depths. Many species of fish, turtles and birdlife are baited and caught accidentally. About 8% of Pacific tuna is caught this way.

Pole and line fishing:

On these vessels, used primarily for catching of tuna and skipjack, the fishermen stand at the railing or on special platforms and fish with poles and lines.

The purse seine catch in 2001 was about 835,000 MT. Most of this catch was taken by distant water fleets operating in the region, made up of 29 American vessels, 41 Taiwanese vessels, 35 Japanese vessels, 27 Korean vessels, 14 Spanish vessels, and 10 Filipino vessels – a total of 156 vessels. Domestically-based purse-seine vessels in the Pacific Island region accounted for an estimated 136,000 MT. The domestic or locally-based fleet includes 19 vessels in PNG, five in FSM, five in the Marshall Islands, one in Kiribati, two in Vanuatu and three in New Zealand (former vessels of the US fleet).

The tuna longline catch in 2000 was about 217,000 MT, which was a record catch for the region. Bigeye and yellowfin comprised 62% of the catch, while albacore comprised 37 percent. Most of this catch was taken by large vessel distant water fleets of Japan (216), Korea (166) and Taiwan (149). There were 108 Chinese longliners registered on the *Forum Fisheries Agency Regional Register* in 2000/2001. However there has been significant growth in the domestic and locally based longline fisheries in such countries as FSM, Fiji, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

Much of the pole and line catch was taken by the Japanese distant water fleet, comprising 40 vessels and accounting for about 65,000 MT. There are also domestic pole and line fleets in the Solomon Islands and French Polynesia. The general trend, especially for domestic based operations, has been a gradual reduction in the number of vessels active in this fishery due to economic factors and technological advances in the purse-seine fishery. Pole and line fleets formerly operating in Palau, Kiribati and PNG are no longer active.

Pirate fishing

Apart from the fishing pressure on the Pacific tuna stocks that is created by the official, regulated fisheries, pirate fishing is a big problem in this region. There are currently no good estimates of total catch taken by pirate fishing, or illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, but it is recognised throughout the region that they take massive amounts of fish. IUU fishing is undertaken by both local and foreign fishing vessels without licenses. Vessels with licenses are considered IUU if they are not regulated accordingly, do not report their catch, or

are deliberately targeting species they are not licensed to catch. Fishing vessels without licenses operate within EEZs and in adjacent high seas areas. Pirate vessels will often fish illegally within rich fishing grounds inside EEZs and then falsely claim that their catch is caught in the high seas. Due to the limited capacity of the Pacific Island states to sufficiently patrol their often huge EEZ areas, these pirate fishers are not caught very frequently. It will be a big challenge for the newly established *Tuna Commission* to effectively ban these pirates from the Pacific.

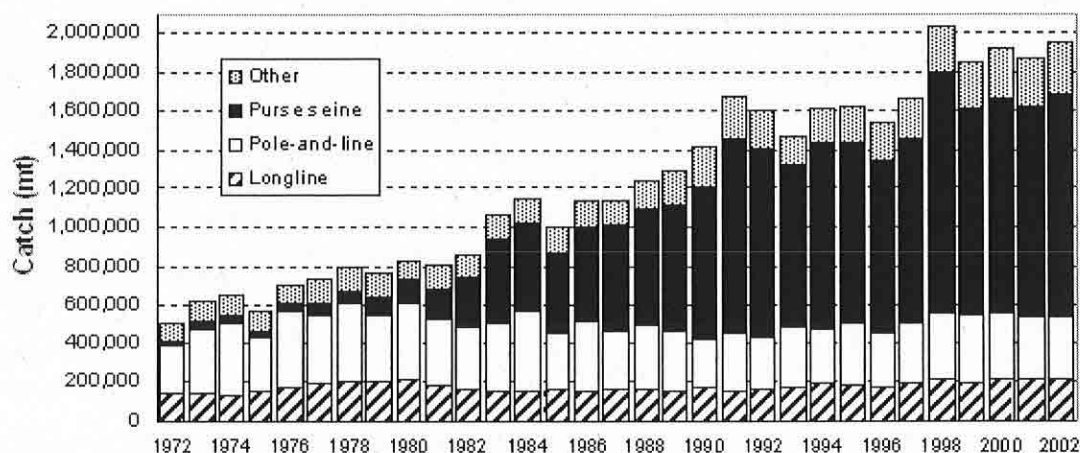


Figure 2: Catch (in mega tonnes*) of Albacore, Bigeye, Skipjack and Yellowfin in the Western Central Pacific Ocean, by longline, pole-and-line, purse seine and other gear types. (source: Greenpeace Rainbow Warrior 2004 Pacific Islands fisheries tour)

*1mt = 1000 tonnes

Sustainability of the Pacific tuna stocks

The definition of sustainable levels of fishing has proven difficult for many years and in all fishing grounds. The fishing industry is interested in fishing large quantities of fish to obtain higher returns whereas environmentalists are stressing a cautious approach on fishing activity. Fishery biology is therefore not only scientific but also often a political exercise, especially because outcomes of research are highly depending on what kind of data or research is used. The overview of status and stocks in the Western and Central Pacific for 2002 from the *Oceanic Fisheries Programme* of the *Secretariat of the Pacific Community* (SPC) showed the following analysis:

Skipjack Tuna: The available fishery indicators suggest that, while skipjack tuna stock biomass in the WCPO shows considerable inter-annual variation, the fisheries have had little measurable impact on the stock. The percentage reduction in stock biomass attributable to the fishery has been 20–25% in recent years. Current levels of stock biomass are high and recent catch levels are easily sustainable under current stock productivity conditions.

Yellowfin Tuna: The assessment reaffirms the result of the previous assessment, that the yellowfin stock in the WCPO is presently not being overfished and that it is not in an overfished state. However, the stock is likely to be nearing full exploitation and any future increases in fishing mortality would not result in any long-term increase in yield and may move the yellowfin tuna stock to an overfished state.

Bigeye Tuna: The current bigeye tuna assessment indicates, that the stock is not in an overfished state, although overfishing is occurring and the current level of exploitation appears not to be sustainable in the long term, unless the high recent recruitment is maintained in the future.

South Pacific Albacore Tuna: The South Pacific albacore tuna stock declined moderately since the early 1980s. This decline in stock biomass was mainly recruitment driven, as was the slight recovery in the mid-1990s. One hypothesis concerning the relationship between recruitment and oceanographic conditions predicts that recruitment may have been low in 1999-2000, but may increase over the next few years due to recent La Niña conditions. The impact of the fishery on the overall stock is estimated to be small, and higher levels of catch could likely be sustained.

During the "Our Oceans, Our Future, Our Choice Tour" of Greenpeace in the summer of 2004, Greenpeace voiced their concerns on the current fishing pressure in the Pacific. The following is taken from their press release of 1 September 2004:

"Tuna are a critical resource for many developing Pacific Island countries. Widespread collapse of these fisheries could lead to a domino effect of collapsed economies as crucial income disappears," said Quentin Hanich, Greenpeace Oceans Campaigner. "Unless urgent action is taken, these fisheries will begin to collapse within 3 to 5 years with devastating consequences for the stability and future of the Pacific region."

"One long-liner caught no tuna while two other long-liners caught only four fish between them in four hours, from their 75km long-lines. Five out of six purse seiners hauled in dismally small catches, and the sixth wasn't much better. Captains on two other purse seiners we visited complained of small catches while another captain told Greenpeace that there were 60 large purse seiners operating within a 60 nautical mile area."

"It's getting desperate when pirate fishing vessels, who fish unfettered by regulations, can't even haul a good catch," said Hanich. "Tough rules are urgently needed that close ports and markets to pirate fishers, and limit fishing effort to sustainable levels. The new Pacific Fisheries Commission must act to rescue these fisheries and protect this vital resource now."

The impacts of over-fishing are already being felt by the Pacific fishing industry. Managing Director of Caroline Fisheries Corporation in Pohnpei, Milan Kamber, told Greenpeace that the industry is alarmed by two consecutive years of poor catches: *"Our ships used to come in with 3- 4000 tons (per year), now they're barely coming in with 2000 tons."*

In August, scientists from the Standing Committee on Billfish and Tuna found that the region's main tuna species; bigeye and yellowfin, were threatened by over-fishing. However, these assessments understate the problem because they used out of date data, that did not include the large increases in fishing effort due to the influx of Taiwanese owned purse seiners.

The importance of tuna for the South Pacific

Few areas or regions of the world will be more dependent on the fisheries sector for development and food security than the South Pacific. The diet of the Pacific islanders is heavily dependent on fish as a source of protein and essential fatty acids and the South Pacific tuna fishery is the Pacific Islands' main natural resource with the greatest potential for the expansion of exports from Pacific Island countries. The overriding importance to Pacific Island nations of the ocean in general, and the tuna resource in particular, is evident. For instance, tuna represents one-third of all exports from the Western and Central Pacific countries and provides employment for 30-40,000 Pacific islanders. For many Pacific Island countries, it represents the only significant source of income and basis for future economic development. But there are also differences between countries in the region: For instance, the atoll states, such as Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands have few alternatives for development other than fisheries and some limited tourism, whereas some of the larger islands (Papua New Guinea, Fiji and the Solomon Islands) have other significant economic opportunities, including timber and minerals.

Tuna is the target of the only significant industrial fisheries in the region with half the world's canned tuna supply coming from the Pacific. The majority of this tuna is being caught by foreign nations from Asia (Japan, China, Philippines, Korea, Taiwan) and the USA. The annual value of the tuna fisheries amount almost two billion dollar per year, which is about 11 percent of the region's Gross Domestic Product. The majority of this money does not stay in the region however, but goes to the countries of origin of the foreign fishing fleets and to the countries where the fish is processed. Since tuna processing in the Pacific region is expensive due to the isolation of the Pacific islands, limited infrastructure and relatively high wages, processing facilities on the islands are only limited with canneries in PNG, American Samoa, Fiji and the Solomon Islands. The access fees paid by the fishing nations for the benefit of the Pacific island countries totals only US\$ 60 million which is just approximately 3-4 % of the total value. Additional noticeable benefits for the local industry are non-existent. This is in violent contrast with the intentions of the Pacific governments who try to strengthen and develop their involvement in the fisheries sector by generating employment, maximising financial returns from licensing arrangements and fish exports, encouraging shore-based development and exercising more effective control over fishing operations within their EEZs.

Tuna for food security in the Pacific Islands

Tuna is an important component of the small-scale fisheries in the region. Virtually all tuna caught in those fisheries is consumed within the Pacific Islands. In general, tuna is most important in the diet of countries made up of small, resource-poor islands. Although tuna caught by the industrial fishing fleets is often thought not to enter the food supply of the Pacific Islands, there have always been important exceptions. Japanese owned Solomon Taiyo sold about 1000 MT of frozen tuna in local markets on the Solomon Islands in 1998; 20 percent of the company's canned tuna production at Noro is consumed domestically. In Fiji, the PAFCO cannery in Levuka sells about 11 percent of its production (equivalent to about 6 percent of the country's total consumption of canned fish) on the local market. "Leakage" of frozen tuna from industrial operations into the domestic food system has always been significant at canneries and, more recently, transshipment points. The emergence of medium-scale tuna longline operations in most Pacific Islands has resulted in the sale of damaged tuna, undersized tuna and by-catch on the domestic markets.

A survey on the Solomon Islands shows, that local sales of frozen tuna reached between 400 MT and 500 MT per year in the late 1980s early 1990s. Further more frozen fish from the industrial fishery makes up for a large portion of shortfalls in the supply of fresh fish. Local sales of canned tuna on the Solomon Islands increased from 19,628 cases in 1976 to 163,863 cases in 1990 (equivalent to 329 MT to 2873 MT of whole fish). In the Federated States of Micronesia tuna longline by-catch sold to public in population centers can be an important contribution to available protein at affordable prices. In Tuvalu 50 percent of all fish sold in Funafuti is tuna, and the entire catch of Palau's lone pole/line vessel in operation is sold for local consumption.

The regional per capita consumption of fish, about 55 kg per year, is substantially higher than the world average of 13,32 kg. In fact, the recorded fish consumption of some countries in the region – Kiribati, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Palau – is among the highest in the world. Fish is an extremely important part of the diet of the average Pacific Islander and tuna makes up a substantial portion of all fish consumed, especially in the most vulnerable countries in the region.

PNG, Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa are categorised as low-income food-deficit countries by the UN *Food and Agriculture Organisation* (FAO). The fact that tuna is an important part of the diet in many of these countries attests to the important role of tuna in the food security of the region. Also relevant to food security is the fact that tuna is often landed in quantities that exceed immediate requirements. In many island communities, especially those that are remote and lack electricity, the excess catch is smoked, baked, or dried and stored for use during periods of food scarcity.

Country	Per Capita Fish Consumption
Cook Islands	67.8
FSM	73.4
Fiji	41.8
Kiribati	181.6
Marshall Islands	61.3
Nauru	50.0
Niue	62.3
Palau	107.7
Papua New Guinea	16.9
Solomon Islands	44.8
Tokelau	129.4
Tonga	34.5
Tuvalu	113.0
Vanuatu	27.0
Samoa	31.8

Table 2: per capita fish consumption, early 1990s (kg/year)
(Taken from Tuna, a key economic resource in the Pacific Islands – ADB 2001)

The European interests in Tuna

The European market is the leading world market for canned tuna (some 530,000 tonnes of which 280,000 tonnes are imported) ahead of the United States (400,000 tonnes of which 120,000 tonnes are imported from Thailand) and Japan (100,000 tonnes of which 30,000 tonnes are imported). The EU's tuna interests lie in supplying its existing canneries and fishing vessels with adequate raw materials. Spain remains the EU member with by far the largest interest in tuna products, with a catch of approximately 400,000 tonnes in 2000, coming mostly from third country (principally ACP) access agreements. This made Spain the third largest tuna fishing nation after the USA and Thailand in 2000. The key EU members with an interest in the fisheries sector are Spain, France, Portugal and the UK. With declining fish stocks in community waters combined with over-capacity of fishing fleets and/or processing plants, and the implication of this for rising unemployment, there is significant political pressure to maintain access to the resources of other countries fisheries. The two biggest EU processed tuna producers, France and Spain, are also those with these biggest ownership stake in fleets operating in ACP Exclusive Economic Zones indicating the significant supply chain linkages between the two regions.

In the light of this background, the European fishing fleet is now looking at the tuna stocks in the Pacific Ocean. With no history in Pacific fishery, the fisheries council of the European Union issued in June 2001 a negotiating mandate to the European Commission to start negotiating fishery agreements with Pacific Countries. In July 2002 this resulted in the first bilateral fishery agreement with Kiribati, followed in February 2004 by a second agreement; one with the Solomon Islands and a third one with the Federated States of Micronesia in May 2004.

Although it is remarkable that fishing boats from Spain, France and Portugal will have to sail to the other side of the world to access the fishing grounds in the Pacific, it does not necessarily have to be a bad development that the EU is starting to fish in Pacific waters, since it also opens up the opportunity for Pacific Island states to negotiate better agreements than, for example, with the Asian fleets. Especially since there is now a shift in the fishery

agreements: the EU is now entering from "cash for access" agreements into *Fishery Partnership Agreements* with third countries in for example Africa, Asia and the Pacific. These new agreements should offer better conditions and opportunities to the coastal state than the former agreements of the EU, which were based only on "cash for access" meaning that European countries simply pay for fishing in an other countries EEZ, without many other obligations attached. According to the European Commission, these new *Partnership Agreements* will "ensure the implementation of a sustainable fishing policy and a rational and responsible exploitation". In a communication of the European Commission (COM(2002)637) it is further emphasised that, "these fisheries agreements generate in Europe and the coastal states important, often vital, economic activities, not only through the exploitation of fishing resources but also through the development of associated activities. The positive impact of the new Partnership agreements on the Developing Country's local economies should even be more important in the future."

Whereas these intentions might be genuine and welcome, the track record of the European fleet in developing countries, for example in Africa, may not be ignored. Instead of fishing only for surplus fish stocks (which is fixed in international law as well as part of the European fishery agreements), EU vessels see themselves competing, with for example local African fishermen, for the scarce marine resources. The Europeans, with their more sophisticated equipment, are of course no match for the small scale artisanal fisherman. Many examples from Mauritius, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea and other countries are available. Since Europe only recently started fishing in the Pacific region, no information about the practises of the European fleet in the region is yet available, but it is of course interesting to see how the already concluded agreements are contributing to the intentions of the Pacific governments to strengthen their own fisheries sector.

The Pacific realities

The fishery agreements with Kiribati and the Solomon Islands are in this respect not very hopeful. An interesting difference in the two agreements is that the Kiribati agreement was concluded in 2002 under the old EU fisheries regime and can therefore be considered as a normal fishing agreement. The Solomon Islands agreement is part of the new regime and is therefore referred to as a *Fisheries Partnership Agreement*. One would therefore expect that the regulations in the Solomon Islands agreement are more beneficial to the Solomon Islands than the Kiribati agreement will be for Kiribati.

When the wording and content of these two agreements are compared, the differences that can be observed are as remarkable as they are alarming. Although the agreements look quite similar, there are a few differences to be observed, and these differences are surprisingly to the benefit of Kiribati which officially has not yet signed a partnership agreement with the EU but a regular one. The differences between the agreements include less local crew on board of EU fishing vessels in the Solomon Islands agreement (so less opportunities for Solomon Islanders to get on the job training in modern fishing practices), no transshipment provisions in the Solomon Islands agreement (resulting in no creation of jobs onshore and added value in Solomon harbours), and less non refundable advance payments for fishing licenses in the Solomon Islands agreement (so less guaranteed money when fishing is poor). The differences of these agreements are also summarised in table 3 (page 13). In practice this means that the opportunities for the Solomon Islands to invest in the development of their own fisheries sector under the new EU fishery agreement is more limited than the opportunities given in the EU-Kiribati agreement. The remarkable thing is however, that the Solomon Islands should be better off in this respect, because of their "Partnership agreement" with the EU.

One can speculate that the disadvantages in the Solomon Islands agreement are a result of the weaker bargaining position of the Solomon Islands due to the civil unrest from 1998 to

2003 and their need to revive their collapsed economy as a result of this. It was remarkable to see that the fishery agreement was announced in the Solomon Islands at the time that development commissioner Nielson was in the Solomon Islands to emphasise Europe's (financial) role in the assistance to the country after an Australian led intervention force restored law and order in the country. It is not unthinkable that the Solomon Islands government did not want to engage in tough negotiations over its fisheries resources with the EU in gratitude for EU's development assistance in other fields.

When ECSIEP questioned the EU *Directorate General Fisheries* about the differences between the agreement with Kiribati and the Solomon Islands, the response was that the provisions in the agreements are all subject to free and open negotiations between the parties. In other words: when a Pacific Island state does not clearly demand certain provisions, the EU will not help them to find more favourable conditions (as you may expect in a partnership agreement which is also committed to development in the coastal states).

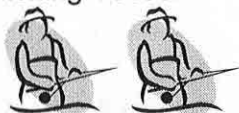



Regular Agreement (Kiribati)	Partnership Agreement (Solomon Islands)	Difference
Minimal 2 local crew members on board of EU fishing Vessel 	Minimal 1 local crew member on board of EU vessel 	Less development opportunities for local fishermen in Solomon agreement
Minimum standards for transshipment of fish	No minimum standards for transshipment	Less opportunities to stimulate local economy and less control on illegal fishing in Solomons
Higher advance payments 	Lower advance payments 	Less income when fishing is poor in Solomon situation

Table 3: differences between the Solomon Islands and Kiribati fisheries agreements with the EU.

Globalisation

A highly relevant aspect to Pacific fisheries which has not yet been addressed in this dossier is the linkage to World Trade issues. Because this is a rather complex issue, and space in this dossier limited, this issue will only be very briefly discussed in this section.

One issue linked to globalisation is the fishery subsidy: Many of the fishery industries from the distant water fishing nations receive subsidies from their governments. These subsidies can hurt the fishing industries of Pacific Islands in three different ways:

1. When fish is being sold by the distant water fishing nations in the Pacific Islands for lower prices than the prices of the local fishermen; they can hurt the Pacific domestic fish export.
2. When the tuna from Pacific fishing companies has to compete with the tuna from the distant water fishermen in third markets.
3. Finally, they can hurt the Pacific domestic fish export to markets of the distant water fishing nations.

On the other side of the coin, Pacific fishery can benefit from subsidies when these subsidies are directed to their own industries either by their own government or by provisions in fishery agreements with distant water fishing nations. The *World Trade Organisation* (WTO) is now looking at methods or disciplines to regulate these subsidies. It is now feared, that when

these disciplines are formulated without adequate consideration of the interests of the WTO's smallest members, they will undermine the economic development of the small vulnerable coastal states. The risk is, that large powerful fishing countries will be able to divert WTO attention away from their own subsidy schemes at the cost of other subsidy schemes that are being implemented by the smaller developing coastal states. Or that the disciplines against the distant water fleets do not make distinction between developed and vulnerable states and can therefore also seriously affect the artisanal fleets.

Other issues related to globalisation are the EU *Economic Partnership Agreements* (EPAs) with the Pacific islands that are currently being negotiated. These agreements have to comply with WTO standards, and this can have an impact on current preferential treatment of the Pacific Island states by the EU. At the moment, the 14 Pacific Island states that are member of the ACP (Africa-Caribbean-Pacific group of states with a special relationship with the EU) are able to export tuna to the EU under the same preferential import regime as the EU member states. When the EPA will have to meet WTO standards in the (near) future, this preferential treatment is expected to end.

Conclusion

Tuna is an important natural resource for the Pacific region, which due to the isolation, small size, and lack of infrastructure of most of the islands is difficult to fully harvest by the Pacific islanders themselves. Many island states have therefore signed agreements with larger industrialised nations to fish in their waters and receive a fee from these nations which is marginal compared to the value of the resource. Europe has now also entered the arena of Pacific tuna fisheries and concludes new more developmentally oriented agreements with Pacific states. So far, it has not been observed that these *Fishery Partnership Agreements* between Pacific Island states and the EU automatically guarantee a fair agreement for a Pacific state or a push in the development of their own fisheries sector. Therefore a critical analysis of the agreements and the negotiations leading to them as well as monitoring of the existing agreements is badly needed.

Apart from this, global developments of WTO regulations affecting fisheries subsidies and trade preferences can have a significant impact on the future revenues of Pacific fisheries and it is therefore important that the Pacific will be well represented at these international negotiations.

Some facts about Pacific tuna

- ☐ Tuna is one of the most important renewable natural resources for the Pacific Island countries with a very high economic value;
- ☐ For the economies of the low lying island states, fisheries is one of the few natural resources that can be used to obtain foreign revenue. For the economies of the larger islands, fishery is also responsible for an important part of the national product;
- ☐ Tuna fisheries produce about ten times the amount of fish produced by all the other fisheries of the region combined;
- ☐ Artisanal fishing: Tuna forms a substantial component of the catch of both the subsistence and artisanal fishery in the South Pacific. With respect to volume, tuna appears to be the most important family of fish for small-scale fisheries;
- ☐ The importance of fish, and in particular tuna, in the South Pacific, has been likened to the importance of petroleum for the states in the Middle East;
- ☐ 10 % of the catch is caught by the islanders themselves. The remaining 90% is caught by foreign fleets;

- The value of the caught tuna in 1998 is estimated at US\$ 1.9 billion (about 11 percent of the region's GDP), whereas the access fees paid by the Distant Water Fishing Nations to the Pacific Island countries totalled about US\$ 60 million (approximately 3% of the total value!);
- Tuna makes up a substantial portion of all fish consumed, especially in the most economically vulnerable countries of the region. The fact that tuna is an important part of the diet in many Pacific countries attests the important role of tuna in the food security of the region;
- The future food security of the region will depend heavily on its tuna resources, highlighting the need for effective conservation and management of the region's tuna.

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Websites

Although by far not conclusive, the following internet sites contain interesting additional information on the issue:

<http://www.antenna.nl/ECSIEP> (will become www.ecsiep.org in the near future): specific information on fisheries in the Pacific

<http://www.ffa.int>: website of the Forum Fisheries Agency based in Solomon Islands.

<http://www.icsf.org>: website of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers

<http://www.cape-cffa.org>: website of the coalition for fair fisheries agreements with lots of information of EU fisheries agreements with (mainly African) third countries

<http://www.fao.org/fi/fcp/fcp.asp>: information and statistical data on fisheries in specific (Pacific) Countries

http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/index/index_en.htm: Official site of the European Commission Directorate General Fisheries (you will not find the latest information on this site).

<http://www.spc.org.nc/OceanFish>: homepage of the SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme

<http://www.spc.int/coastfish/index.html>: homepage of the SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme.

<http://www.islandsbusiness.com>: Islands Business magazine regularly publishes relevant articles on (tuna) fisheries in the Pacific. These articles can be found on this website.

<http://www.greenpeace.org.au>: internet site of Greenpeace Australia/Pacific

<http://www.atuna.com>: (commercial) news on tuna fisheries.