



***Statement of Outcomes from the Nineteenth Annual Session of the
Forum Fisheries Committee Ministers Meeting (FFC Min19)***

1. Ministers representing Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu met on 24-25 August 2022 at the 19th annual Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Committee Ministers Meeting held in Tarawa, Kiribati.
2. Australia, FSM, Nauru, PNG, Samoa, Tokelau and Vanuatu were represented at senior official level. RMI, Samoa and Tokelau participated online.
3. Ministers welcomed the participation of partner and observer organisations including CROP partners the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Community (SPC). Ministers particularly welcomed the attendance of WCPFC Executive Director Feleti Teo, PIFS Deputy Secretary General Filimon Manoni and Chief Executive of the PNA Office Dr Sangaa Clark.

Ministerial Chair

4. Ministers thanked the outgoing Ministerial Chair, Honourable Semi Koroilavesau of Fiji, for his outstanding work and commitment in chairing FFC for the past year.
5. Ministers welcomed the Kiribati Minister for Fisheries, Honourable Ribanataake Tiwau, as Chair of the 19th FFC Ministerial meeting.

Annual Report

6. Ministers thanked FFA Director-General Dr. Manumatavai Tupou-Roosen for the Agency's Annual Report Executive Summary for the 2021-22 year, and congratulated her on the achievements of the Agency over the past year.

7. Ministers expressed their thanks to the Secretariat for the ongoing delivery of support and services to Members despite the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on Members and the Secretariat.
8. Recognising the importance of the Annual Report as a key part of the Agency's governance and accountability to Members, Ministers recognised the Secretariat's commitment to provide financial reporting to accompany the reporting to the Annual FFC Committee. Ministers endorsed the Executive Summary of the FFA Annual Report for 2021-22, noting that the full Report will be forwarded to Forum Leaders in accordance with the FFA Convention.

Fisheries Roadmap: Offshore Fisheries Report Card

9. Ministers welcomed the report on the Tuna Fisheries Report Card recognising that it is intended to provide a snapshot of trends for specific sustainability, economic and social outcomes and targets for regional tuna fisheries.
10. Ministers expressed their strong desire to increase the level of economic benefits generated to Members from the region's tuna fishery through greater involvement in all levels of the value chain.
11. Ministers expressed support for future reporting to provide additional strategic analysis on drivers of the economic performance of the fishery and the associated investment environment. Ministers requested that this reporting: addresses members' participation in the value chain and other opportunities to increase the economic benefits that they derive from the region's tuna fisheries; provides strategic advice in relation to drivers of the economic performance of the various tuna fisheries in the region; and examines relevant issues at the regional, sub-regional and national level. Ministers welcomed the proposed review of current reporting, data collection and use of indicators with regard to economic and investment trends.
12. Ministers noted that the findings of the *Independent Review of Forum Leaders' Decision to Increase Economic Returns from Fisheries* will be considered as an integral component of the review of current reporting and the development of additional strategic reporting. In this regard, Ministers also recognised the need for a review of the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries, to ensure the frameworks that underpin our work are sound and appropriate targets and indicators are set for the offshore fishery.
13. Ministers expressed strong concern regarding the persistently poor economic performance of the southern longline fishery, which is primarily based on South Pacific

albacore, and noted the strategic importance of this fishery. Ministers emphasised the need to prioritise dedicated efforts over the next 12 months to see improved economic performance and reporting over the next year.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Tuna Fishery

14. Ministers recognised the resilience of Members and the FFA Secretariat to adapt to the impacts of COVID-19 and acknowledged the ongoing support provided to members to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic including support for video conferencing and connectivity.
15. Ministers noted that virtual meetings have been useful for advancing work over the past two years but highlighted the value of face-to-face meetings for progressing sensitive discussions and negotiations and for building relationships and strengthening solidarity.
16. Ministers welcomed ongoing work to prioritise and sequence the work of the Agency, so as to reduce the number of virtual meetings, avoid impediments to the effective participation of Small Island Developing States members in regional forums, and ensure Members have time for preparation and for important national work.
17. Ministers thanked officials and the Secretariat for work done to support observers during the pandemic, including work on observer livelihoods and development of the observer insurance scheme, and emphasised the need to support the safe redeployment of observers on purse seine vessels by 1 January 2023, given that WCPFC has agreed to lift the temporary suspension of observer requirements.
18. Ministers recognised the disruptions to fisheries management and operations during the pandemic, and the necessity to reinvigorate monitoring, control and surveillance programmes as a matter of priority, whilst ensuring the health and well-being of fishing crews and MCS personnel.
19. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of tuna fisheries in supporting the recovery of Pacific national economies, and the need for officials to investigate diversification opportunities such as value-adding and new markets to improve economic returns.

Impacts of Climate Change on Oceanic Fisheries

20. Ministers noted the potential for major reductions in revenue over time should tuna stocks move to the high seas in response to climate change effects. Ministers emphasised that now is the time to develop management strategies that will ensure continued access to benefits derived from the shared tuna resource.

21. Ministers agreed that climate change represents a great threat to our way of life and supported a coordinated regional approach to address this threat, and noted the steps to achieve this outlined by the Director General. Cooperative fisheries management was identified by Ministers as essential to build resilience into our collective fisheries which are critical elements of our economies. Ministers placed particular importance on the work to support transitioning to adaptive fisheries management regimes and the need to further progress agreement on effective zone-based limits for the southern longline fishery, in particular in those EEZs that are yet to implement limits.
22. Ministers suggested more frequent Our Ocean Conferences, perhaps annual, could be considered to support our efforts and noted that climate change can't be dealt with nationally and requires strong regional collaboration, in particular supporting a 'one voice' approach to our international engagement as Pacific SIDS. Ministers also highlighted the importance of CROP collaboration at the UN COP and encouraged continued cooperation among CROP in advancing the inclusion of fisheries in the climate change negotiations.
23. Ministers recognised the strong call by Forum Leaders to scale up ambition and turn pledges into action to respond to the Climate Emergency. Ministers were united in urgently calling for enhanced ambition and action to support adaptive management that ensures the ongoing sustainability of, and benefit flow to Pacific Island countries from, tuna fisheries in the face of climate change. Ministers recognised that climate justice is tied to broader processes and asked the FFA Secretariat and CROP partners to investigate different approaches to avert, minimise and address loss and damage to fisheries caused by climate change.

Implementation of Zone Based Limits and Management

24. Ministers commended the efforts made by Members during the covid-19 pandemic in continuing discussions on zone-based limits and associated management arrangements for the South Pacific Albacore stock within their waters.
25. Ministers noted key issues with regard to the implementation of the Regional Longline Strategy, including the continued and increasingly urgent need to establish zone-based limits across the membership as an important prerequisite to progressing associated management arrangements, including within WCPFC.
26. In particular, Ministers emphasised the importance of the South Pacific albacore longline fishery to their economies, and called on all Members to work together to agree zone-

based limits for this fishery. Ministers noted that the current interim target reference point for South Pacific albacore is no longer acceptable to all Members and supported a reassessment of management objectives for the fishery.

27. Ministers called on the Secretariat to demonstrate strong leadership to develop cohesive regional policy and strategies for the South Pacific albacore and southern longline fisheries, that ensure compatibility with the Longline Vessel Day Scheme and take into account and effectively integrate subregional needs.
28. Ministers endorsed next steps including proposed bilateral consultations between the Secretariat and Members to identify national positions and concerns, and preparation of a report by the FFA Secretariat on the status of monitoring and reporting of longline fisheries taking South Pacific albacore to address gaps and inform the development of a comprehensive monitoring strategy to support management of the South Pacific albacore stock and the southern longline fishery.

Priorities for WCPFC

29. Ministers acknowledged the progress by FFA Members in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in 2021, but noted the challenges for Members imposed by the proliferation of online meetings. Accordingly, Ministers agreed to a rationalised number of priorities to be progressed by FFA at WCPFC for 2022 including: reform of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme, in particular, development of Audit Points and Risk Based Assessment Framework; Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring; Transshipment; management of South Pacific albacore; harvest strategy issues including development of a management procedure for skipjack tuna; and development of a new management measure for South-West Pacific swordfish.
30. Ministers further agreed to a number of medium-term priorities to progress through 2022 and 2023 to support 2023 outcomes including progressing the work on Harvest Strategies for bigeye, yellowfin and South Pacific albacore tuna; Tropical Tuna measure (high seas limits and allocation frameworks); Crew Labour Standards; and Observer Safety.
31. Ministers emphasised the opportunities presented by a return to physical WCPFC meetings for effective strategising ahead of WCPFC19 with partners and other Commission Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories in the margins of these meetings to progress issues.

32. Ministers unanimously endorsed the nomination of Mr Glen Joseph, RMI, as the next WCPFC Chair.

US Tuna Treaty Renegotiation

33. Ministers recognised the importance of the Treaty in supporting Pacific Island Parties to achieve their national objectives in relation to social and economic development.

34. Ministers thanked the outgoing FFC Ministerial Chair Honourable Semi Koroilavesau of Fiji for leading their collective efforts to secure the \$60 million per annum for the US financial contribution to the Treaty from mid-June 2023 to mid-June 2033. In doing so, Ministers highlighted the strength of Pacific solidarity in achieving this outcome.

35. Ministers noted the ongoing negotiations with the United States on the issues of: fisheries access in 2023; access in 2024 and beyond; broader cooperation under Article 3 of the Treaty; and the US proposal for a comprehensive partnership and called for regular updates from the Secretariat and officials on these negotiations. Ministers recognised the need to ensure that the interests of all Pacific Island Parties are protected in these negotiations.

36. Ministers also recognised the desire for improved efficiency across administrative and operational management of the Treaty, such as observer management.

Update on Independent Review of FFA Governance

37. Ministers noted the progress of the Independent Review of FFA Governance and asked that this be reported to officials before being presented to Ministers at their next Annual FFC Ministerial meeting in 2023.

Fisheries subsidies

38. Ministers welcomed the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies finalised at the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022. Ministers noted that the Agreement will provide Pacific WTO members with additional means to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by subsidised distant water fishing nations. Ministers welcomed the Agreement's prohibition of subsidies for fishing in the unregulated high seas areas, such as outside an RFMO's area of competence, by vessels from flag States that are WTO members.

39. Ministers noted that the Pacific Group will need to develop a strategy of comprehensive engagement in the negotiation of the disciplines on certain forms of subsidies to overcapacity and overfishing and effective Special and Differential Treatment. This will

also allow Pacific Island Countries to take up other key issues in relation to the treatment of licensing fees and the treatment of small-scale fisheries.

Crew labour standards

40. Recalling the decision at FFC Min 18 to pursue the development of a binding WCPFC measure on crew labour standards, Ministers acknowledged the importance of this on-going work to ensure that crews have safe and decent working conditions on board fishing vessels in our region.
41. Ministers highlighted the need for progress on crew labour standards at national level, noting that the requirements in the Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions have provided a basis for crew conditions within EEZs, and this could drive a consistent approach to crew conditions across the region. Given the need to protect the human rights of crews on fishing vessels in the region, Ministers welcomed the appointment of a labour standards adviser to the Secretariat.

FFA Deputy Director General

42. Noting that FFA Deputy Director General Matt Hooper will end his term with the Secretariat at the end of 2022, Ministers thanked Matt for his service to the Agency and Members over the past four and a half years.