

PACIFIC BÊCHE-DE-MER & THE FUTURE OF COASTAL FISHERIES MEETING

06-08 AUGUST 2014

CALL TO ACTION

1. Summary

The Republic of Fiji, the Kingdom of Tonga and the Republic of Marshall Islands co-hosted in partnership with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), the University of the South Pacific (USP), the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Management in Pacific Island Countries (MACBIO-GIZ), the Government of New Zealand, the Ministers and senior officials from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga for the inaugural *Pacific Bêche-de-Mer and the Future of Coastal Fisheries Meeting* in Nadi, Fiji, from the 06-08 August 2014.

The Summit was convened to:

- obtain a common understanding of the ecological status of and socio-economic benefits of bêche-de-mer (BDM) and other coastal fisheries to Pacific Island Nations, and the urgent need to take action;
- to discuss constraints and opportunities to collectively and effectively address threats and challenges to BDM and other coastal fisheries management; and
- to obtain political will and ministerial-level commitments towards effective national and regional approaches to BDM and other coastal fisheries management, to strengthen actions at the national and local level.

Participants acknowledged:

- existing regional and national policies and initiatives on coastal fisheries, including the Pacific Islands Regional Coastal Fisheries Management Policy (Apia Policy), the Vava'u Declaration, the developing Melanesian Spearhead Group *Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development*, and the Micronesian Challenge;
- decisions made by leaders at the 45th Pacific Islands Forum in July 2014 in Palau, including the endorsement of the Palau Declaration *The Ocean: Life and Future Charting a Course to Sustainability*; and
- the roles of SPC in providing scientific, technical, management advice and capacity building, and USP in providing research, vocational and tertiary training around coastal fisheries, as well as complementary activities by other national, regional, international and NGO partners and institutions.

2. State of Coastal Fisheries

Participants recognise:

- the over-exploited state of coastal fisheries in all Pacific Island Nations and calls for urgent action to improve the management of coastal fisheries to be sustainable;
- that if the current state continues, an alternative supply of fish protein will be needed in the majority of Pacific Island Nations within the next two decades;
- the challenges to effective coastal fisheries management including: the allocation of adequate resources for management at all levels, limited or lack of other income generating alternatives and opportunities for coastal communities, lack of political will to approve new management measures, weak community based management and the variation and lack of continuity of monitoring protocols;
- the emphasis on offshore fisheries has led to a lack of consistent support for coastal fisheries management;
- it is timely to shift the emphasis into coastal fisheries management;
- an overall lack of coordination of activities of international, regional and NGO partners at regional and national levels in coastal fisheries management; and
- the growing role of sub-regional initiatives through the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the Micronesia Challenge.

3. The State of Bêche-de-Mer

Participants noted that:

- for fisheries in the Pacific, the overall export value of the BDM fishery is second to tuna with a US\$10 billion market in China alone and a growing global demand;
- sea cucumber stocks are depleted as a result of uncontrolled fishing in the region, resulting in moratoria required for stock recovery which in turn leads to reduced economic opportunities for many remote communities;
- there is inequity in the value chain for BDM, with fishers and Pacific Island Nations receiving low levels of compensation for their work and resources; and
- the need for more research on role of sea cucumbers on the ocean ecosystems, aquaculture opportunities, management and market mechanisms at national and regional levels.

4. A Call To Action


We, the Ministers and the Representatives of Participating Countries, call for the following actions:

1. Pacific Island Nations take political leadership and urgent action to implement more robust coastal fisheries management regimes at a national and sub-national level, by ensuring effective, practical and enforceable policies are in place and implemented, targeting essential capacity at national and sub-national levels, reviewing budgetary commitments and strengthening coordination of implementing partners;
2. Review and harmonise our regional framework for coastal fisheries, including the role of current regional and international institutions, agencies and NGOs to promote collaboration and integration, to ensure countries receive strong, coordinated and effective support on coastal fisheries management;
3. Immediate action on BDM Management including:
 - improved structures and processes for sharing data and information on buyers, markets and best practices at a regional level, with SPC and interested partners;
 - targeted research on opportunities and market mechanisms that will improve the value of BDM to Pacific Island Nations and other areas to improve knowledge and management of BDM; and
 - a special meeting in early 2015 of interested Pacific Island governments, respective private sector organisations and the civil society, to progress BDM management and investigate opportunities for a "Parties to the Nauru Agreement-like initiative" for BDM; *and*
4. A follow up coastal fisheries ministerial meeting in 2015 that will also bring private sector and all key regional and international partners to report on progress on the national implementation and recommend a way forward on BDM management and regional coastal fisheries coordination.

Annex

1. Summaries of the Meeting
2. Meeting Concepts
3. Participants List

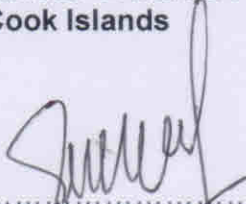
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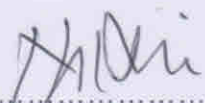
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Hon. Minister Mona Ioane
Minister of Marine Resources
Cook Islands



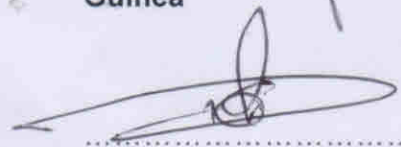
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Hon. Minister Butulso David Tosul
Minister for Agriculture, Livestock,
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Hon. Minister Lenatai Victor Tamapua
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Minister of Lands & Natural Resources
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