



PARTIES TO THE NAURU AGREEMENT

17th Annual PNA Ministerial Meeting

17 June 2022

Communique

Ministers from Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, and Solomon Islands met via Zoom from 15-17 June 2022 for their 17th Annual Meeting, to consider a range of priority issues related to the sustainable management and development of PNA fisheries. Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, and Tokelau were represented by senior Officials. The meeting was chaired by Hon. Nestor Giro of Solomon Islands.

The key outcomes from the meeting of Ministers included the following:

Ministers **expressed** their condolences on the passing of the late Honourable Minute Alapati Taupo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Fisheries and Trade of Tuvalu, and **paid tribute** to his long service to Tuvalu and the region in fisheries and other fields.

Ministers **welcomed** the new CEO, Dr. Sangaalofa Clark, and **acknowledged** the great contribution to PNA made by the previous CEO, Mr. Ludwig Kumoru.

Ministers **appreciated** the continuing mutual achievements of PNA in 2021 and 2022 to date, while operating within the constraints of the COVID-19 situation. These achievements came from hard work and standing steadfastly together to maintain their collective control over their tuna fisheries.

PNA Headquarters Building

Ministers **particularly appreciated** that the Office had moved into the new Headquarters Building. Ministers saw the Building as a clear symbol of the success of the PNA. Ministers looked forward to enriching the Building with artifacts representing PNA communities and cultures.

Ministers **expressed appreciation** to the RMI as host of the PNAO and looked forward to a special in person convening in Majuro to officiate the PNAO Headquarters sometime in 2023, or when the RMI borders are fully open.

PNA Office Performance

Ministers **commended** Officials and the Office for the high quality of the PNA Office reporting and financial management processes. These were particularly important because of the critical role of the PNA Office in administering the VDS, managing funds held on behalf of the Parties, and supporting the efforts of Parties more broadly to maximize the individual and collective economic returns from their tuna fisheries.

COVID-19

Ministers **were thankful** for the resilience of the PNA and other regional fisheries arrangements during the COVID pandemic. Purse seine VDS revenues had been broadly maintained providing funding for Government services through a critical time. However, the local longline fisheries and domestic economies, had suffered from the lack of port-based activities, and Ministers **particularly regretted** the loss of livelihoods for the hundreds of observers that served the region. Safely reestablishing in-port services and getting observers safely back to work are now the regional priorities.

Healthy Stocks

Ministers **welcomed the updated scientific advice from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community** that all major tuna stocks in PNA waters continue to be reported as healthy and none are assessed as overfished or subject to overfishing. They **noted** that the Western and Central Pacific remains the only oceanic region in the world where the tropical tuna resources are being fished sustainably, and **expressed their appreciation** to all the governments and industry interests who contribute to this shared outcome through the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

At the same time, Ministers **noted the need** for further management action to conserve the depleted stocks of some shark species.

Ministers **reiterated their commitment** to ensuring the sustainability of the regional tuna resources and the valuable fisheries for those resources on which PNA and Tokelau communities heavily depend.

Industry Development

Ministers **noted** the changing dynamics of the tuna fishery and tuna trade on the back of the COVID-19 impacts and brand dominance in the trade, now complicated with the Ukraine conflict compounding the rising fuel prices, and emerging logistical issues both at sea and in the distribution chain. Ministers **noted** the continued high levels of effort and profitability of the sector and the need to continue to foster opportunities for the development of their domestic sectors.

Climate Change

Ministers **strongly supported** the proposed initiative for the PNA to engage more directly in climate change, integrating information on the impacts of climate change into decision-making

on PNA tuna fisheries, and focusing on policy responses to the injustice of adverse climate change impacts on tuna stocks and PNA fisheries.

WCPFC Approach

Ministers **welcomed** the renewal of the WCPFC Tropical Tuna Conservation and Management Measure by the Commission with some improvements on FAD management. The Ministers **expressed appreciation** to their Officials and the Office for the effective participation by PNA in the work of the WCPFC, despite the small size of their administrations and the difficulties of participating in virtual meetings because of Internet constraints.

Ministers **expressed their appreciation** to the WCPFC Chair and Executive Director and their staff for being able to maintain the work of the Commission so effectively in the face of the difficulties arising from COVID-19. Ministers **endorsed** Mr. Glen Joseph (RMI) as a candidate for Chair of the WCPFC if the current Chair steps down.

PNA Vessel Day Schemes

Ministers **expressed appreciation** for the continuing effective implementation of the Purse Seine and Longline VDSs by the PNAO and the national officials involved with VDS implementation. They **noted** the continuing success of the Purse Seine VDS as a key factor in the successful management of regional tuna resources and fisheries, while it continued to contribute large economic gains to PNA Members and Tokelau.

PNA Compliance Committee

Ministers **welcomed** the first report from the Independent Chair of the PNA Compliance Committee, Ms. Rhea Moss-Christian. Ministers **considered** the report of the PNA Compliance Committee to be a healthy step towards improving the effectiveness of PNA management measures that would increase their mutual benefits from the regional tuna fisheries.

Tuna Treaty with the US

Ministers **welcomed progress** in the renegotiation of the Fisheries Treaty with the US, and **remained committed** to achieving an appropriate and fair outcome.

Marine Stewardship Council Certification

Ministers **recognized the value** of recognition of the sustainability of the PNA purse seine fishery by the Marine Stewardship Council, and **endorsed** the PNA Office maintaining the MSC certification in support of PNA Party based initiatives.

Review of the FSM Arrangement

Ministers **welcomed the update** on progress on the Review of the FSM Arrangement aimed at improving the Arrangement so that it facilitates and supports Parties' development aspirations, and asked for further work on reviewing the FSMA.

Review of the PNA Observer Agency

Ministers **supported** the decisions taken by Officials to maintain and strengthen the role of the PNA Observer Agency.

Independent Review

Ministers **welcomed** the report to Leaders by the Inter-Agency Taskforce established to oversee the Independent Review of the Forum Leaders' 2015 Decision to Increase Economic Returns from Fisheries. Ministers **stressed** the importance of the ability of the PNA Office to provide advice to Parties free of external influences, and **requested** the Office to provide reports to PNA Leaders on their tuna fisheries.

Done on the 17th Day of June, Two Thousand and Twenty Two.