

**Fourth International Meeting on the Establishment of the proposed South
Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation**

**Nouméa, New Caledonia
10 – 14 September 2007**

REPORT

1. The Fourth International Meeting to discuss the establishment of a South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation was held in Nouméa, New Caledonia, 10 – 14 September 2007. It was chaired by the independent Chair, elected at the First International Meeting, Bill Mansfield.
2. The Meeting adopted Annex A as its agenda.
3. The Chair reported that, as requested by the Third International Meeting, he had revised the draft Agreement (SP/03/WP1) discussed at that Meeting, taking into account the comments participants had made on the text, and had circulated the revised draft text (SP/04/WP1) to participants.
4. The Meeting held general and specific discussions on issues related to the text. Each provision of the text was then discussed in turn, with delegations circulating specific textual proposals, raising questions and seeking clarifications on the draft text. The Meeting requested the Chair to circulate a further revision of the draft text of a Convention, taking into account the discussions during the Meeting. The Meeting requested that the revision of the draft text of a Convention be made available well in advance of the next meeting.
5. New Zealand presented a report on the establishment of the Interim Secretariat. The report noted that following international advertisement of the position and a transparent and robust selection process, Dr Robin Allen had been appointed Executive Secretary of the Interim Secretariat and would take up the position in October 2007.
6. Andrew Penney, Chair of the Science Working Group (SWG) presented the report of the SWG (Annex B) which had met in Nouméa from 4 - 7 September. The report noted the considerable progress made by the group in its intersessional work and proposed a future work programme. The Meeting adopted the report of the SWG and adopted the interim Benthic Assessment Framework (Annex C) to guide benthic assessments under the Interim Measures

for Bottom-Fishing, and a Process by which these will be reviewed and commented upon (Annex D). The Meeting noted that:

- the SWG is continuing to work on expanding this interim Framework into a detailed Benthic Assessment Standard which will be tabled for consideration and adoption, possibly at the next international meeting;
- progress is also being made by the Jack Mackerel Sub-Group with the development of the *Jack Mackerel Research Programme Proposal* and the *Jack Mackerel Stock Structure and Assessment Workshop* to be held in 2008;
- the SWG is taking the first steps towards establishing a Deepwater Species Sub-Group, and is developing an assessment approach for Deepwater Species.

7. Kelly Denit, Chair of the Data and Information Working Group (DIWG) presented the report of the DIWG (Annex E) which had met in Nouméa from 3 – 4 September. The report noted the progress made regarding various data standards and proposed a future work programme. The Meeting adopted the report of the DIWG and the standards for the collection, reporting, verification and exchange of data for squid jigging and potting (Annex F).

In relation to the implementation of the interim measures¹, the Meeting:

- adopted the *Vessel Monitoring System - Standards for the collection, reporting, verification and exchange of data* (September 2007) (Annex G);
- agreed to a minimum of ten percent observer coverage for pelagic fisheries;
- noted that the Interim Measures require one hundred percent coverage for bottom trawling fisheries;
- agreed to a minimum of ten percent observer coverage for bottom fisheries other than bottom trawling;
- agreed that the distribution of observer coverage will be representative of the distribution of each States fishing effort;
- agreed that this observer coverage is intended for scientific purposes;
- agreed that this observer coverage may be provided by Flag State observers;

¹ The current interim pelagic measures exempt squid fisheries (per paragraph 9 of the pelagic fisheries section).

- endorsed the work that the DIWG has done to date in developing the *PROPOSED Standards for the collection, reporting, verification and exchange of observer data*, and requested that the DIWG continue to develop these Standards -

for the period of effectiveness of the interim measures adopted May 4th, 2007 in Renaca, Chile. The Meeting recognized this does not preclude consideration and adoption of improved measures prior to the entry into force of the Agreement.

8. The Meeting agreed that the Fifth International Meeting to discuss the establishment of the proposed South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation would be held in Guayaquil, Ecuador, from 10 – 14 March 2008, with the SWG and DIWG meeting the week before. Delegates were urged to advise the Interim Secretariat of the composition of their delegation well in advance of the next meeting.

9. The Meeting noted that in view of the progress achieved at the Nouméa Meeting and in order to enable more intensive development of the text, the next meeting would operate predominantly in a smaller working group mode. The Meeting urged delegations to forward without delay following the Meeting electronic copies of any proposals tabled in Nouméa to the Interim Secretariat for placing on the website. Any further proposals should be submitted to the Interim Secretariat for posting on the website well in advance of the next meeting.

10. The Meeting thanked the Government of New Caledonia for hosting the Meeting.

11. The Meeting closed at 12:45pm on 14 September 2007.

12. The Meeting was attended by those representatives who appear in the List of Participants (Annex H).