



***“Oceans and sustainable development: Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic”***

**Submission by the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency to the Part 1 Report**

***i. Information regarding the relevant activities of your Organisation fostering an integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development with regards to the oceans:***

The joint aim of the 17 members of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) is that “our people will enjoy the highest levels of social and economic benefits through the sustainable use of our offshore fisheries resources”. Tuna resources are critical to the livelihood, economies and culture of many Pacific Islanders, and in order to protect that now and in the future, FFA strengthens national capacity and regional solidarity so that our members can manage, control and develop their tuna fisheries.

FFA provides support to member countries in the development of regional and national policy and legal frameworks for the sustainable management of tuna, and supports monitoring, control and surveillance of fisheries. FFA also works with our Pacific Island member countries to increase the contribution of the fisheries sector to trade, employment, food security and government revenue. The work of FFA has contributed to our members achieving a marked increase in the overall contribution of the fisheries harvest sector to their GDPs, rising 25% between 2011 and 2012 alone.

The EEZs of FFA members provide around 40% of the global supply of tuna for canning, contributing a healthy, easily stored and relatively low-cost protein food to the world. This sector also makes a significant contribution to Pacific Island food supplies, particularly in urban centres.

The region has a long history of cooperation in the management and development of tuna resources, and three of the four main tuna stocks – accounting for 95% of the catch – are harvested within sustainable limits; but continual growth in distant water fishing capacity also threatens these resources.

***ii. Challenges and opportunities in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development:***

***Incongruous economic drivers and social values between different nations exploiting a shared resource***

While the international scientific and fisheries management community are in relative agreement on what represents a sustainable fishery, there are vast differences between nations on what economic or social characteristics are desirable in a fishery. As such, where multiple nations are required to work together for the joint management of shared ocean resources, their objectives will substantively differ depending on their economic or social context and values. This is most obvious in the Pacific in the

South Pacific Albacore fishery where low catch rates and low prices are causing Pacific Island domestic fleets to cease operations. At the same time foreign fishing fleets continue to expand their operations in the fishery due to cheaper costs, and the subsidies of some nations further exacerbates the problem. The stock status remains above levels considered biologically unsustainable, and these factors combined mean that the international consensus required to bring about management change is not possible given nation's diverse economic, social and environmental values. This situation is not unique to the South Pacific Albacore fishery, and the difficulty of getting international consensus on economic, social and environmental objectives for shared oceanic resources is likely to become increasingly common as the biological and/or economic viability of fisheries are further compromised.

#### *Full implementation of UNCLOS article 61 paragraph 3*

Pacific Island fisheries administrations are continually working to obtain full consideration of UNCLOS article 61 paragraph 3 of UNCLOS (mirrored in UNCLOS Article 119), which contains a commitment that measures shall "be designed to maintain or restore populations of harvest species at levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield, as qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors, including the economic needs of coastal fishing communities and the special requirements of developing States". Yet in the WCPFC, and typically other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, MSY is calculated primarily using biological parameters with the remainder of the UNCLOS concept avoided. As a result, MSY is rarely "qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors".

FFA members have collectively recognised that for Pacific Islands to develop real economic involvement in fisheries in and adjacent to their national jurisdictions, tuna stocks may in many cases need to be maintained at biomasses that are higher than the level that produces Maximum Sustainable Yield. At MSY, catch per unit effort is a fraction of CPUE from unfished stocks, and high CPUE is a key factor in enabling developing states to get a foothold in the industry and develop their own fisheries within their own waters, as well as being the only way of actually sustaining without subsidies fisheries for certain lower-yield stocks like South Pacific albacore tuna.

As part of the continued promotion of the concept within WCPFC and other intergovernmental fisheries management instruments, specific activities to better recognise the full intent of UNCLOS article 61 paragraph 3 include:

- Collaboration between FFA, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), TeVaka Moana (TVM) and the SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme to develop bio-economic models of fisheries allowing quantitative estimates of the sustainable yield of tuna fish stocks in terms of economics as well as target stock population dynamics;
- Concerted efforts to achieve regional agreement on Target Reference Points for economically-critical WCPFC stocks (skipjack and southern albacore) that take these wider sustainability factors into account; and
- Subregional agreements between major blocs of countries on target reference points and harvest strategies that take into account economic and social objectives of Pacific Island states.