



FIFTH REGULAR SESSION

8-12 December 2008

Busan, Korea

FRENCH POLYNESIA – OPENING STATEMENT

WCPFC5-2008/DP14

8 December 2008



**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR FISHERIES
OF FRENCH POLYNESIA
HON. TEMAURI FOSTER**

Mr Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the government of French Polynesia, I would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the government and the people of the Republic of Korea for their warm welcome and hospitality. I would also like to thank the organizing committee and the Secretariat staff for their hard work and excellent meeting arrangements.

This is the first time a French Polynesian delegation is led by a minister for fisheries and I am honoured to represent my country at this very important meeting.

The main purpose of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission is to ensure the long term conservation and sustainable management of the fishing resources in the Pacific Ocean, which are the only resources, we, Pacific islanders, have truly in common. I can assure you that French Polynesia is committed to this aim and will actively collaborate with others CCMs in a responsible manner.

We do face difficulties and challenges in protecting and managing our tuna fisheries and I hope that we will be able to reach a consensus on the main issues identified for this meeting, such as the adoption of the bigeye and yellowfin tuna measure and the need to progress on the issues of transshipment, VMS and Regional Observer Programme. On this later issue, I would like to stress the importance of finding adequate financial resources for small island developing States and territories.

Fisheries are particularly important to French Polynesia. My country has been developing its long line fishing industry since the middle of the nineties. Today, there are about seventy active longliners, which are fishing about six thousand metric tons per year, mostly albacore tuna.

This industry is our third most important, after tourism and pearl farming. Our effort is focussed on creating conditions for the sustainability of fish stocks and protection of the environment.

As an example, purse seine activities are prohibited in French Polynesia since 1997 and no purse seine fishing vessel is allowed to operate in our Exclusive Economic Zone. With this

respect, I would like to clarify that the purse seine fishing vessel registered in the Commission's database as operating in French Polynesia doesn't actually exist. It was supposed to be part of a tuna farming project and to catch juvenile yellowfin tunas, but this project never started.

We are preoccupied by the increasing number of purse seine vessels fishing along our EEZ or even crossing it, showing that the fishing effort is now transferring from the East to the West, in the WCPFC Convention area, which is certainly a threat for the Western and Central Pacific stock management.

We pay particular attention to IUU fishing activities and transshipment at sea and we strongly support the Commission's efforts to prevent or regulate those activities.

Due to its unique geographical position, French Polynesia being the only CCM located in the overlapping IATTC and WCPFC area, I would also like to recall the importance of information exchange and measures harmonization between both Commissions.

French Polynesia is fully committed to fulfil its obligations under the Convention and is ready to play its modest but full part in the work of the Commission.

As a signal of our commitment and as a token of appreciation for the role of the Commission, I have the honour and privilege to formally announce that French Polynesia, in accordance with France, would like to host in Tahiti the 6th WCPFC regular session in December 2009.

We wish for this meeting fruitful discussions and efficient measures and we hope to see you all next year in Tahiti and its beautiful islands.

I thank you for your attention.